DOCTORAL THESIS

Fragmented Daughters in the Novels of Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov and the Case Studies of Josef Breuer and Sándor Ferenczi

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Fragmented Daughters in the Novels of Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov and the Case Studies of Josef Breuer and Sándor Ferenczi

by

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the triadic relationships in works by Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov. I have used two psychoanalytic case studies, Bertha Pappenheim and Elma Pálos, to reflect how James and Nabokov use the analytic method for revealing stifled and fragmented voices in their daughter characters.

I theorise that while Henry James prefigured the analytical doctor/patient dynamic in the father/daughter relationships in his novels, he also adds the mother figure, turning this into a triad. The controlling mother fragments the daughter's speech and the situation of the triadic relationship damages the daughter's ability to articulate her narrative. The novels, *Watch and Ward* (1871), *Washington Square* (1880), and *The Awkward Age* (1899) show James's developing recognition of the role the mother plays in the triad, as well as his own role as author and narrator of the daughter's story.

The case studies also contain damaging triadic relationships. There has been limited interest in the triads and this, so far, has not been commented upon as a reason for the daughter's mental disturbance. I use unpublished letters to try to uncover the 'real' voice of Elma. I see that literary and psychological criticism has been guilty of mistakes in research and misrepresentation. This has further fragmented the story of these women.

I hope to show that both Henry James and Sigmund Freud inspired Vladimir Nabokov, despite his vehement opinions against them. He presents the same scenario of the triadic relationship, in a fictional but analytical setting, to express his own anxiety about 'losing' his native language. His feminised struggle is apparent in *Lolita* (1955), and even more so in the character of Lucette, in *Ada* (1969). Nabokov sees that, in analysis, the mother is a

threat to the daughter's self-expression. He develops the mother character in his fiction to represent this discovery.

While analysts think they can successfully narrate the female patient's story, both Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov acknowledge the struggle and possible futility of this.

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Introduction

> My feelings towards James are rather complicated. I really dislike him intensely but now and then the figure in the phrase, the *turn* of the epithet, the *screw* of an absurd adverb, cause me a kind of electric tingle, as if some current of his was also passing through my own blood. –*An Interview with Vladimir Nabokov*, 1967[1]

A literary relationship between Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov would develop throughout the twentieth century leading Barbara Eckstein, writing for *The Henry James Review*, to say 'I cannot read James as though I have not read Nabokov; specifically, I cannot read *What Maisie Knew* as though I have not read *Lolita*' (190). The figures of the daughter and the older fatherly male are found all through the works of these two writers, trampling over one another in an effort to be heard. These figures embody not only the different cultural, political and psychological ideas of the time, but reflect an impulse to explore a part of the author's own life, and thus to penetrate a realm of the psyche that is usually only attempted in autobiography and personal correspondence.

Father and daughter figures from the literary canon have been discussed for their highly sexualised and mutually destructive relationships. What has not been analysed sufficiently is the part the mother figure plays in the lives of this dyad. The combining of these three figures to focus on a damaging triadic relationship is a theme that highlights the concerns these two authors wish to convey to their readers. Their conjectures concerning the dangers of destructive mothering and the mother's role in prolonging a harmful father figure/daughter relationship are often epitomised by the silencing and fragmenting of the daughter's voice. Adrienne Rich, in her revealing study *Of Woman Born*, on mothers and motherhood says:

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[1] Alfred Appel Jr. (1967)

> This cathexis between mother and daughter – essential, distorted, misused – is the great unwritten story. Probably there is nothing in human nature more resonant with charges than the flow of energy between two biologically alike bodies, one of which has lain in amniotic bliss inside the other, one of which has labored to give birth to the other. The materials are here for the deepest mutuality and the most painful estrangement […] Yet this relationship has been minimized and trivialized in the annals of patriarchy. (225- 6)

In *The Lost Tradition*, Cathy N. Davidson and E.M. Broner have brought together a historical catalogue of mothers and daughters, and have highlighted the mother's voice in nineteenth century fiction. In her contribution, Susan Peck Macdonald suggests that 'the absence of mothers, then, seems to me to derive not from the impotence or unimportance of mothers, but from the almost excessive power of motherhood' (58). My contention is that James and Nabokov subtly use both the underlying and the explicitly sexualised father/daughter relationship to conceal the threatening mother figure. The attention paid to the mother and daughter in their fiction is not trivialized and is essentially the nexus of the daughter's narrative.

This thesis examines the interest James and Nabokov took in their literary explorations of this triadic relationship, and the damaging effects on the voice of the daughter. It argues that both authors use some form of the case study as a methodology whereby James and Nabokov situate these daughters within their texts while reflecting on their own role as author of these studies. My analysis of the triadic relationships in these novels creates a fundamental shift in the study of both authors' work. Through this self-awareness of their authorial power, they consciously reflect on the doctor/patient relationship and the psychoanalytical method as a cure for patients in analysis. Analogies can be found in actual case histories. By exploring the case study of 'Anna O' and the fragmented study of Elma Pálos, I can see that the edits of the published case studies are quite different from the 'real' case study that emerges through the patient's letters, testimonials, and other creative outlets.

The representation of these two women, not only by their analysts but also by subsequent critical commentary on the original case studies, has the effect of further fracturing the stories of these women through the editing of narratives or through critical and analytical mistakes. Comparisons with these women, who are submerged in these father/mother/daughter triads, can be made with the presentation of the character of the daughter in James and Nabokov's novels. The novelists are aware of the problem of representing a young female character, and seem to manage better than the analyst does, as the authors are more self-aware as narrators.

What is clear is that both James and Nabokov chose to develop the life of the daughter who is caught in this period of transition between acquiring a voice and having it repressed. It is easy to read into every symptom and mistake made by the analyst and find a parallel of these symptoms and mistakes in literature. Both James and Nabokov whose work displays the effects of failed "analysis" apprehend the countertransference that Freud failed to recognise in his early case histories, notably his study of 'Dora', and their novels can read like case histories.[2] As we chart the chronological development of James's and Nabokov's fiction, we can see that both authors are able not only to immerse themselves in the lives of their fictional daughters, but also take a step back to view their own involvement in this writing and creating process. Thus, they recognise the countertransference between themselves and their female character.

The importance of Henry James in the critical milieu has remained constant, and flourishing interest in his intimate life has escalated and opened up a legitimate comparison

[2] The term 'transference' is the development of an emotional attitude towards the analyst on the part of the patient. It can be positive or negative. 'Countertransference' is an attitude developed by the analyst towards the patient, which could affect the analysis and needs to be recognised by the analyst. Freud has often been criticised for his lack of recognition of his own attitude towards 'Dora' and other patients, but in his defence, psychoanalysis was very much in the primary stages and was a 'work in progress' in the first decade of the twentieth century.

between biography and fiction with psychoanalysis. There is the activity of *The Henry James Review* and the recent critical studies of James's fiction, *Death in Henry James* (2005) by Andrew Cutting and *Henry James and Queer Modernity* (2003) by Eric Haralson. There is consistent interest in his life shown in Miranda Seymour's *A Ring of Conspirators: Henry James and his Literary Circle* (2004), and novelizations of his life as portrayed in Colm Toibin's *The Master* (2004), David Lodge's *Author, Author* (2005), Emma Tennant's *Felony* (2003), and Michiel Heyn's *The Typewriter's Tale* (2005), the last of which proved difficult to publish in a saturated market.

Similarly, Nabokov's legacy has been regularly reappraised in the media. In 2005, Alexander Dolinin's discovery of Sally Horner epitomized the recurring compulsive need among 'Nabokovians' to find the original Lolita.[3] The coverage of Nabokov's last incomplete manuscript *The Original of Laura* is to be published in November 2009 by his son Dmitri, who had for years threatened to consign it to the fire.

The father/daughter relationship has long been of literary interest to authors and critics alike. As a classical parallel to Oedipus, Freud, who focused on the oedipal myth, surprisingly neglected the Electra complex. It was his disciple, Carl Jung, who named the Electra complex in 1913. The tendency to focus on the mother/son instead of the father/daughter is a pattern in psychoanalysis, repeated in the emerging sociological culture of Post-Second World War Britain, when Anna Freud[4] and John Bowlby[5] focused on mother/child separation. In their studies, the father's role within the family was simply as either a presence or an absence but was not investigated in depth. By the 1950s, American

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[3] Alexander Dolinin, 'Whatever happened to Sally Horner?' *Times Literary Supplement,* 9 September 2005, pp.11-12.
[4] Anna Freud and Dorothy T. Burlingham, *War and Children*. (New York: Medical War Books, 1943)
[5] John Bowlby, *Childcare and the Growth of Love.* (Great Britain: Pelican Books, 1953)

popular culture had shifted and the literary and psychoanalytical focus was to enquire into the father/daughter relationship as detailed in Rachel Devlin's study *Relative Intimacy*. Both psychoanalysis and literature have always tended to focus on these dyads and not looked toward a revision of these psychoanalytically orthodox roles.

Marianne Hirsch contends that 'Maternal absence and silence is too much the condition of the heroine's development' (47). She sees that among Victorian women writers, the mother has been made 'inconsequential' (47). While this is not the case in English fiction, (Dickens and Eliot for instance), American literature may have been guilty of creating inarticulate mothers, and both James and Nabokov bring the mother back into the literary sphere. In their novels, missing and lost daughters travel through the texts and are situated in and as a testing ground for the author's own responses to their contemporary socio/psychological environment. They pit her against the destructive forces from within the family. The daughter's narrative voice is fragmented by not only the author, but also by the narrator and paternal figure. However, it is my contention that these daughters are most notably prey to the mother figure, who manipulates both father and daughter. Thus, the mother turns an already destructive relationship into a triad in which the daughter's voice is further subdued.

There is an intimate relationship between the novels of James and Nabokov and the early psychoanalytical case studies, which I discuss, and which James prefigures and Nabokov imitates and ridicules. The effects of fragmentation they discern in the daughter are further observable in each author's attempts at revisions and editing within their own work. Both James and Nabokov have concerns with the reception of their novels. How his fiction would be received was a big concern for James and so he would undertake substantial revisions with the aim of controlling that reader response. Nabokov, also concerned with

reception would use his characters to reveal the difficulties an author faces when giving up his novel to an editor and his readership. Both these methods cover up early bursts of creativity and generate silences that pervade both author's and character's lives.

The fragmentation appears in the form of a stifled voice, or an inability of the daughter to narrate her own thoughts, producing speech that is often incoherent, full of pauses, and interruptions. My purpose is to show that James and Nabokov began to recognise the problems authors and analysts face when presenting a narrative and so engaged with the recovery of speech.

The developments in James's work and his recognition of the difficulty of representing a female voice in fiction can be charted from his early attempts at writing, specifically his novella *Watch and Ward* (1871), and his revision of this work. His developments are also seen in his editing, with the effect of silencing, the letters of his cousin, Mary (Minny) Temple. If we follow this fragmenting effect through to *Washington Square* (1880), and on to *The Awkward Age* (1899), James's characterisation develops. He appears to come to terms with his early attempts at silencing his female characters and his cousin, and he makes reparation for this in *The Awkward Age*. Here he creates a daughter who can finally beat her mother at her own game. The silencing effect the mother has on the daughter seems to mirror James's own difficulty of possessing a voice under the dominance of his father and mother. His empathy with the daughter's trials against imposing and manipulative parenting echoes that of his own and his sister, Alice's repression within the James family home. Growing up with their mother and aunt as carers, both James and Alice would have felt overly mothered.

The daughter figures in Nabokov's novels also have to face the damaging effects of strong and manipulative mother figures. This depiction of the daughter, who has to find a way to be heard in his novels, is emblematic of Nabokov's own fears of being misrepresented. He translated his own novels and consistently wrote his answers to interviews, such was his concern with all the details being correct. Throughout his life his one 'private tragedy' was that he would not write another novel in his original mother tongue.[6] While living in Germany as an émigré he would claim ignorance of the German language, wanting to preserve his native Russian. He would retain sympathy for other émigré Russian poets and writers whom he saw as sidelined and forgotten. This loss of language translates through to the figure of the daughter as she struggles to find a new way of speaking that will allow her to be heard against the parental oppressors.

Peter Brooks (1987) has a problem with psychoanalytical literary criticism. He argues that 'psychoanalysis in literary study has over and over again mistaken the object of analysis, with the result that whatever insights it has produced tell us precious little about the structure and rhetoric of literary texts' (334). He says that psychoanalytic criticism, and he specifically targets feminist criticism, focuses too much on the author, narrator, or fictive character and not enough on the textual elements of literature. As the basis of his argument, Brooks uses Freud's assertion that the experience of an author is used in the construction of fantasy (in this sense the creative output) and so can be used by critics to study the writer's work. Freud suggests that the experience is usually an infantile event in the personal life of the artist/writer. Brooks reworks this theory. Instead of a past experience which creates a fantasy wish to be fulfilled, he suggests that: 'The fantasy model could instead be suggestive for talking about the relation of textual past, present, and projected future in the

[6] Vladimir Nabokov, 'BBC 2 Television Interview 1962' in *Strong Opinions.* p. 15

plot of a novel' (336). My own view and interpretive strategy encompass elements of both Freud's and Brooks' theses. By examining the personal experience in a writer's life, the developments in the chronology of an author's work can be traced and the concerns of the writer can be exposed.

Wimsatt and Beardsley's 'Intentional fallacy' proposes an alternative way of reading a text. Their argument, 'that the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the literary art' (Wimsatt, 3), opposes the idea that biographical elements of an author's life can tell us about the text itself. As an example of the intentional fallacy, they discuss an author's revision of his own work:

> There is a sense in which an author, by revision, may achieve his original intention. But it is a very abstract sense. He intended to write a better work, or a better work of a certain kind, and now has done it. But it follows that his former concrete intention was not his intention. (5)

In this sense, the author's intention has changed. The challenge is to attempt to discover the possible motives for revision and change of intention. An example can be found in James's revision of *Watch and Ward*, which I will discuss. The 'Intentional fallacy', and Barthes's theory of the 'Death of the Author', are equally valuable theories for discussing the art of the poem or novel.

Wimsatt and Beardsley conclude their argument by stating that 'critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle' (18). Leland de la Durantaye has tried to do exactly this, and his recent study on Nabokov's fiction explores the link between morality in Nabokov's novels, and his art. Thus, in *Style is Matter*, Durantaye's first statement of intention is, 'If we are to solve the at once aesthetic and ethical riddle *Lolita* presents, we might begin with what we know of the riddler who composed it' (21). Durantaye specifically uses Nabokov's non-fiction to see if the cruelty displayed in Nabokov's fiction extends to

Nabokov being a cruel writer. In this sense, reading biographically may be a legitimate way of solving this puzzle. In contrast to Brooks's contention that the critic focuses too much on the author without revealing anything of textual importance, Durantaye focuses on the author to specifically gain insight into the textual elements of literature.

Similarly, Barbara Young's recent studies on James's *The Ambassadors* and 'The Great Good Place' have helped her gain insight into her studies on psychoanalysis and adolescence through a study of James's writing style as well as the biographical motives that might have inspired that fiction. Edel says:

> The works of writers are, after all, a kind of supreme autobiography. Within them we can trace, when we have abundant example, that which is characteristic, that which singles out the work from all the others; we can try to look at the shadow of the man within the work – and read what might be called his spiritual biography, or the biography of his psyche. It is at this point that criticism and biography come together. (1965, 157)

Biography opens up options for reading. If we look across an author's range of texts and find 'abundant' examples of 'that which is characteristic', it may stand to reason that delving into the biography and psychology of the author can illuminate these textual elements, e.g. James's revisions and insight into Nabokov's almost impossible structure of *Ada*.

Bent Flyvbjerg, in *Making Social Science Matter* observes:

> Good narratives typically approach the complexities and contradictions of real life. Accordingly, such narratives may be difficult or impossible to summarize in neat scientific formulae, general propositions, and theories. This tends to be seen as a drawback by critics of the case study. (84)

Comparisons between literature and case history encounter real difficulties and have their opponents. It is perhaps too easy to take a novelist and apply his personal medical history to

his writing, but this does not rule it out as a method for reading a text. Peter Brooks contends that literary critics are too eager to apply the personal history of the author to a narrative, and George Rousseau finds that literary historians who study literature and medicine suffer from a lack of interest or creativity in their subject. He observes that there are 'rarely leaps over time; for reasons not usually discussed it is assumed that the writer is influenced by the medicine of his own period.' He continues: 'Secondly, explanations of the method by which the writer has "absorbed" the medicine of his age are often lacking [...] furthermore, the language used to explain this influence is often vague' (408). He argues that the idea that medicine could have been 'the writer's primary urge' are overlooked and that it is common that a critical study of literature starts with medicine which is applied *to* literature, and not the other way around. He advocates a new look at the methods used in literary and medicinal criticism, and states that:

> Every time a patient enters a practitioner's office a literary experience is about to occur: replete with characters, setting, time, place, language, and a scenario that can end in a number of predictable ways. (414)

Rousseau says that the influences of contemporary medical practices are likely to last only a decade but it is my view that the psychoanalytical case history has reverberated throughout literature for over a century.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, there was an upturn of development in medical psychology. Though the "discoveries" of Freud and Breuer in Vienna took another ten or more years to filter through to American mainstream psychology, psychological thought on mental health, especially with regard to nervous

conditions in both women and men, was a hot topic of debate, and of interest to novelists, as well as science. Wendy Graham in *Henry James's Thwarted Love*, claims that

> Psychiatrists who were just beginning to contemplate the influence of the family and environment on the hysterical diathesis in the mid-1890s, challenged religious and educational institutions on the grounds that these promoted morbid introspection, but they did not question the sanctity and healthfulness of normal domestic arrangements. (164)

James's own family background might form a case study in how the family dynamic affects the nature of those in it: and reading any of James's novels, the reader can see clearly the 'morbid introspection' seeping into the consciousness of his fathers and daughters. It rises from the closeted and smothering force of the family, and not from outside interference.

Henry's brother William, the eminent psychologist, had a great interest in German psychology. Eventually Henry himself developed confidence in the 'talking cure', having become a patient of J.J.Putman, a disciple of Freud's. His sister Alice was to become a permanent invalid suffering from hysterical symptoms most of her life, and who tried out all of the popular cures of the time to no avail. These psychiatric and psychological experiments of the *fin de Siècle*, of which psychoanalysis was one, infiltrated the fiction. The novels and short stories from this period rose out of these developments.[7] *Washington Square* and *The Bostonians* (1886) are illustrations of the interest writers took in the psychology of women at this time, and which James chose to investigate. James seemed to anticipate other novelists when it came to absorbing and using these psycho/sociological ideas.

[7] Such texts as *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman published in 1892, and James's *The Bostonians* comment on the nervous woman, and the experimental techniques used to cure them.

James was one of a generation of writers undermining the dominance of the three-volume novel, which Elaine Showalter describes in *Sexual Anarchy* as 'a staple of the Victorian home'. According to Showalter

> The three-part structure dictated a vision of human experience as linear, progressive, causal, and tripartite, ending in marriage or death. When there were no longer three volumes to fill, writers could abandon the temporal structure of beginning, middle, and end, and the procreative and genealogical fable of inheritance, marriage, and death that had been traditionally associated with women writers and Victorian realism. (17)

Like many other 19th century novelists, James would transform these traditional forms of the novel and devise forms resembling psychological case studies that would concentrate on particular points in a person's fragmentary life. Nabokov would also focus on the minute details of a character's life and bring to the fore the pivotal moments that would change it. Both novelists concentrate much of their fiction on the character of the daughter and these pivotal moments were usually brought about by the intervention and actions of the mother or older woman.

The Freudian "revolution" provided a new way of thinking about and insight into female-specific ailments such as hysteria and neurasthenia. After Freud's move away from the seduction theory, he suspected that the personalities and emotions of his patients were likely to stem from a single pivotal moment in their life and always it was found to begin with a moment of sexual awakening. The focus on these pivotal moments meant that other sources tended to be ignored, such as the effect of dubious and/or controlling parental figures, dysfunctional families, and even everyday distorted interactional patterns that over time might lead to neuroses, and a flattened personality void of any emotional responsiveness. Showalter argues that at the same time as writers like James were questioning beliefs in unambiguous endings, 'Psychoanalysis was beginning to question the stable and linear

Victorian ego. Thus many of the stories of the fin-de-Siecle are case histories which describe deviance, rebellion, and the abnormal' (17).

The James family had its share of mental disorder. Fred Kaplan suggests that because James was 'strongly fathered and mothered, he did not want to be father nor husband. The problematic female role had a greater appeal to him' (129). James's flight to Europe was partly to get away from his debilitating family circle. The possibility of love between James and his cousin, the vivacious Minny Temple, ended in tragedy when she died young. Habegger and others have speculated that James committed her to art, replicating her in his female heroines. Throughout his career, James's identification with the daughterly role was subsumed into his novels: *Watch and Ward*, *Washington Square*, *The Bostonians*, *What Maisie Knew*, *The Awkward Age*, and *The Golden Bowl*.

James was enamoured of his young nieces and took pleasure in being an uncle. Mrs Humphry Ward painted a revealing portrait in her diary:

> The western sun was beating on the drawing room windows, though the room within was comparatively dark and cool. The children were languid with the heat, and the youngest, Janet, then five, stole into the drawing room and stood looking at Mr. James. He put out a half-conscious hand to her; she came nearer, while we talked on. Presently she climbed onto his knee. I suppose I made a maternal protest. He took no notice, and folded his arm around her. We talked on; and presently the abnormal stillness of Janet recalled her to me and made me look closely through the dark room. She was fast asleep, her pale little face on the young man's shoulder, her long hair streaming over his arm. (*A Writer's Recollections*, Vol II, 17)

As witness to the upbringing of his sister Alice, James also had access to and recognised the psychoanalytical theories that were gaining ground to probe deeper into the female mind, dissecting, and unlocking the inner workings of the psyche. James revealed a soft spot for his young female acquaintances through his fiction where he appears to identify with his female characters and their inability to speak out against the inequalities they endure within

the family. Through his fiction, James can reveal the stifled voices that so closely resembled those of his sister and cousin.

Tessa Hadley says that 'among the sordid tangle of impropriety and treachery of *The Awkward Age*, James finds it may be possible, after all, to *talk*'(65), and of *The Golden Bowl*, she continues:

> Deep in the very language James uses to piece out the relationship of father and daughter there is an ambivalence: the contradiction of their innocence and their concealments, their transparency and their denial. (165)

If applying Hadley's statement to James's other novels, there seems to be a strong focus on the father/daughter relationship in all its contradiction. This relationship is disrupted by the dangerous mother figure. Both James and later Nabokov pinpoint the little moments when the mother's interaction with the daughter leads to a disintegrating voice. As James's writing develops, the mother appears to become more powerful, and the father or father figure gradually becomes the one person the daughter is more likely to trust.

James's discursive strategies thus closely resemble forms of interaction between doctor and patient. There is rarely a distinction between the voice of the patient and the thoughts and comments of the analyst (in the write up of the case history due to the methods used when recording the case history). While Freud had not yet started his studies on hysteria, James's writing anticipates the problems the female analysand would face when articulating her medical history to the psychoanalyst. Freud claimed that his task of having to write up the case notes ***after*** an analytic session, so as not to shake the 'patient's confidence', meant:

> The record is not absolutely – phonographically – exact, but it can claim to possess a high degree of trustworthiness. Nothing of any importance has been altered in it except in several places the order in which the explanations are given; and this has been done for the sake of presenting the case in a more connected form. (1953, 10)

It is clear from Freud's nervous defence that he has already tampered with the evidence and has started to fill in the gaps and produce a fuller account of the medical history of his patient. Freud's next claim, that his focus on dreams is a 'means of filling in amnesias and elucidating symptoms', clearly implies a patient cannot be fully in control of her narrative. He continues, 'I have restored what is missing' (12). The published and unpublished recordings of case histories by Freud and other analysts are similar to the narratives constructed in the relationship in the triads found in James and Nabokov's fiction.

Freud's form of case history was unlike any other form of doctor/patient relationship.[8] Critics often ignore the provisional factor that Freud's science encompassed. It changed Victorian practice and its treatment of women from often barbaric nineteenth century traditions and took it to new and uncharted territory. Freud's continuous attempts to reform and learn from his experiments meant he has been seen as too involved with perfecting his science in the interests of science, at the expense of his patient's well-being. This notion that the patient must be protected is a late twentieth century attitude, and Freud's methods have sometimes been seen as a violation of this. Thus, Claire Kahane in relation to Freud's case study of 'Dora' says:

> The last several years in particular have seen an outpouring of interpretations of the case, coming more from literary critics, however, than from analysts […] What contemporary readings suggest is that, as brilliant as Freud was in constructing a narrative of Dora's desire, he essentially represented his own. (20)

The inability of the analyst to permit the voice of their patients to be fully heard is the foundation of my interest in the novels of James and Nabokov, who confront the same dilemma when trying to explore the female mental experience in their novels. Obsessed as

[8] For an overview of historic case histories see Brian Hurwitz, 'Form and Representation in Clinical Case Reports,' in *Literature and Medicine*, 25.2, (Fall, 2006), pp. 216-240

they are, they return repeatedly to it, in recognition perhaps of the impossibility of ever fully understanding or representing it. However, Freud may have recognised the same principles that emerge in the analyst's office as Rousseau: that when the doctor and patient come together, fiction is going to enter the recording of this history and is perhaps needed in order to reach a conclusion. Surely, Freud did understand literary strategies, and employed them in his written case studies.

The same is true of James and Nabokov's fiction. Both authors saw beyond their own desires to create a 'case history' out of the characters they created. The self-recognition of past endeavour is represented, thus, the narrators of their novels often comment on these sometimes futile attempts to give voice to the fictional daughter's life. The revisions apparent in James's subsequent editions of his fiction and in his cousin, Mary Temple's letters, suggest an extension of his previous efforts to portray a young female. Each successive novel aspires to perfect this narrative of the daughter figure, and reveals another aspect of his recognition of the daughter's position within the nineteenth century American household. Nabokov is equally preoccupied with how to represent the character of the young girl. The triadic relationships he describes could also have been taken from the 'story' behind the 'stories' of the case studies that emerged. The developments in his writing reveal his initial attempts at portraying this character, and eventually expose an admittance and admission of the difficulties.

Much critical material has been amassed about the lives of the subjects of Freud's case studies, focused mostly on the negative impact of the sessions. John Bowlby, a critic of psychoanalysis, argued that the methodology ignored the real social events that can influence a person's life, particularly family dynamics. It has previously been claimed that

doctors such as Freud and Ferenczi tried to discuss the incidents of sexual abuse among psychiatric audiences, in particular the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, but they were met with silence.[9] There is a silence that is a characteristic method of communication among the psychoanalytical world, and critics such as Jeffrey Masson and Harold Blum who felt that specifically, the marginalisation of Ferenczi's work was a 'conspiracy of silence' have commented upon this.[10]

Ferenczi pioneered a new way of thinking about the falsity of the analyst/patient relationship, and his work was suppressed for fifty-three years. This very issue was taken up in important correspondence in an unpublished letter to Ernest Jones from Michael Bálint (Ferenczi's executor) who points out the failure of psychoanalysts to present the truth of a certain situation. He feels that their view on the analysis relies on personal bias (the countertransference that takes place during analysis and that must be recognised by the analyst for a fair analysis to take place). When Jones disagreed, Bálint proposed that they should 'record our disagreement and trust the next generation with the task of sorting the truth'.[11] Masson notes that 'Ferenczi became convinced that the analytical setting was fraudulent' (157). Ferenczi felt it was the analyst's responsibility to behave as a parent figure, and his clinical diary records in great detail his thoughts on an alternative form of psychoanalysis, involving giving the patient the love s/he didn't receive as a child. Ferenczi

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[9] See Jeffrey Masson, *The Assault on Truth* (London: HarperCollins, 1992) First Published 1984. Masson visited the Salpêtrière Hospital and discovered evidence of sexual abuse of patients that had been subsequently covered up. He realised that Freud had read this material but had ignored it in the process of moving away from his Seduction Theory. He finds evidence in letters to Freud from colleagues who pressured him to abandon publication of his Seduction Theory. On presenting his findings to a closed audience of psychoanalysts, Masson was eventually removed from his position at the Freud Archives.

[10] Harold P. Blum, 'Reply to Drs Emanuel Berman and Peter Hoffer' in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 76 (1995) pp. 1047-1048. This was a response to Emanuel Berman and Peter Hoffer's own response to Harold Blum's article 'The Confusion of Tongues and Psychic Trauma' in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 75 (1994) pp. 871-882.

[11] Michael Bálint to Ernest Jones, (6.12.1957) Bálint Archive, University of Essex.

seemed to hold the patients' well-being above his own interests, and when patient, Elma Pálos, the woman he was in love with and wanted to marry (she was also the daughter of his mistress), was transferred to Freud for analysis, Ferenczi said of Elma 'the issue here should be not one of marriage, but of the treatment of illness'.[12] Ferenczi placed Elma's mental health above his own desires.

The hysterical symptoms of patients often included cases of nervous coughing, aphrasia – an inability to utter complete sentences, and in the case of 'Anna O', a total loss of speech. It is in creative writing, poetry, private letters, and psychoanalytic works by the patients themselves that a voice for the analysand emerges. The case histories explored in this thesis (Anna O and Elma Pálos), have been interpreted by critics such as Dianne Hunter and Masson as illustrating patriarchal power and control in the psychoanalytic process over the young women's lives. What has not so far been explored is the matriarchal role in these case histories and how this contributes to the silencing.

The introspection that characterized both analysis and psychological novels of the late nineteenth century is to be found in 1950s America. Stephen J. Whitfield suggests there was 'a proclivity to hang a giant Do Not Disturb sign over the nation' (154). Freudian analysis had partly retreated in the face of behaviourism, sociology, a focus on family/group therapy rather than one-on-one therapy, and Erich Fromm's new humanistic philosophy. Additionally the Kinsey reports were shocking the nation with their accounts of female sexuality. Rachel Devlin in her study of fathers and daughters in film and fiction suggests that post-war American fiction about boys has been canonized:

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[12] Letter from Ferenczi to Freud, (1.1.1912, I), in *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi. Volume 1, 1908-1914,* ed. by Eva Brabant, Ernst Falzeder, Patrizia Giampieri-Deutsch. (London: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1993)

> Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949), Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd: The Problems of Youth in a Organised Society* (1960), J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1945)' [actually 1951], and Erik Erikson's *Childhood and Society* (1950) […] In many instances, the material on girls and their fathers simply does not measure up to these works; in others, texts have been unjustly forgotten. (3)

Devlin identifies some of these 'forgotten' texts, which include Carson McCullers's *Member of the Wedding* (1946), Grace Metalious's *Peyton Place* (1956), and William Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951). Her argument is slightly tendentious and it is surprising that Devlin does not here name the most infamous novel about the eroticised father/daughter relationship. *Lolita* (1955) was just one of the Nabokov novels to deal with this much-discussed literary relationship and has shown no signs of being forgotten.

The period after the Second World War in America brought a new method of analysis, that of family therapy. This concentrated on the premise that a person's neurosis is not caused by personal and infantile fantasies, but by everyday family behaviour. There began a new focus on the 'middle-town' experience, following the survey, *Middletown in Transition* by Robert S. Lynd and Helen L. Lynd (1937),[13] *The Lonely Crowd* by David Riesman (1950), and *White Collar (A Study of the Professional Middle Class)* by C. Wright Mills (1951). The popularized "all-American girl" culture, engaged in such novels as *Peyton Place*, and mediated in the emerging teenage magazines, meant the father/daughter relationship acquired a clear erotic dimension. In his novels, Nabokov makes it clear that he sees the deficiency within early psychoanalysis and its failure to recognise the disturbance a family, especially the role of the older woman/mother figure, can have on the daughter. He

[13] While this study predates the Second World War it is interesting to note the authors' final conclusion that not even the Great Depression can change this Middletown, (later known to be Muncie, Indiana), from the same conclusions they drew in their previous and first study of this same town eight years earlier. The implication being that nothing can change 'middle' America. It is static. See *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*, 1929.

chooses to represent the family triad and while his novels focus on the erotic father/daughter relationship, he pinpoints the moments when the mother figure gains too much authority over the daughter. He explores the damage she can wreak on the daughter's life path and on the daughter's ability to articulate this experience.

While in this era psychoanalytical concepts were popularised by the mainstream media, Nabokov's own views on psychotherapy are suggestively hostile in that he found psychoanalysis 'grotesque'(*Strong Opinions*, 23), and thought Freud was not 'worthy of more attention than I have granted him'(Appel, Jr, 1967, 130).

Nabokov was possibly more interested, and 'pulled' by psychoanalysis than he would like to admit. In almost all his novels, a male protagonist has experienced at some point an obsessive love with a nymphet, which has ended in tragedy. But it is the mother figure who manipulates the daughter and prolongs the relationship between the male and the daughter, to the detriment of both. Nabokov's problematic 'loss' of his native language, and his efforts to keep hold of it are a symptom and clue as to why he is able to understand fragmentary speech in female case studies, and he represents this understanding in his novels. Both authors feminize themselves in their fiction as a way to understand their own personal histories.

Literature Review

There has been far more critical comparison between the fictional father and daughter relationships as found in novels and the female Freudian case studies than there has been interest in the effects of a triadic relationship in psychoanalysis and fiction. Robert Polhemus gives the relationship a biblical slant in *Lot's Daughters: Sex, Redemption and*

Women's Quest for Authority and Daniel Pick's study of Svengali in George Du Maurier's *Trilby*, of a father figure/daughter relationship, uses Freud's theories on seduction and explores the related practice of hypnosis and analysis. Barbara Eckstein and Julie Rivkin both view James's fiction, in particular *What Maisie Knew*, as having oedipal preoccupations.

The investigation into what exactly it was that Maisie "knew" is brimming with critical possibilities. Neil Hertz examines the narrative of Freud's 'Dora' alongside Maisie's narrative, and considers the impulses Freud and James may have shared in their portrayals of their young girls. Alfred Habegger has paid great attention to the details of James's relationship with Minny Temple and the posthumous editing of her letters. He has also addressed the dominant role within the family of Henry James Sr. The parallels between the "silencing" of Minny by James, and the "silencing" of James by his father are of strong interest to James critics, and much has been made of how these relationships appear in his fiction, but so far, the mother has been excluded from this interest.

William Veeder, Melissa Valiska Gregory, Lynda S. Boren, and Lauren Berlant all examine the relation between the silence and the speech in James's female characters, and Boren and Eckstein in particular see Nabokov as having a precursor in James, despite Nabokov's staunch denials. Andrew Taylor sees James's writing as a paternal inheritance that provided him with a 'productive narrative framework' (15). Taylor makes a point of distancing his study from that of Leon Edel, among others, who use the 'psychologised, Freudian kind' (14) of theory to read James's novels. The influence of Henry Sr. on his son and the antagonism between James and his father may be reflected in James's treatment of his daughter characters.

Brian Boyd, the most prolific of Nabokov's critics, neglects to mention the influence of the mother on the daughter in his studies of *Lolita* and *Ada*. The problem of narration and narrator in Nabokov's fiction has come under scrutiny by Martin Hägglund, who advocates Nabokov's preoccupation with memory and also editing and erasure in his writing. Many 'Nabokovian's' have shied away from discussion of Nabokov's work in its relation to Freud because of Nabokov's strong aversion to him. Yet Jenefer Shute, Geoffrey Green and, more recently, Leland de la Durantaye have attempted to probe the underlying reasons for this dislike. Nabokov spent a considerable amount of time mimicking and making fun of the analyst, and Durantaye's conclusion is an attempt to explore Nabokov's public mistrust and dislike for Freud while also suggesting that privately Nabokov allocated Freud a grudging respect.

Since the case history of 'Dora' has already received so much critical interpretation, I have chosen the case studies of 'Anna O' and Elma Pálos, two case studies that have not attracted nearly so much critical attention particularly with regard to their comparative literary interpretations. Albrecht Hirschmüller's biography of Josef Breuer reveals that Breuer's account of 'Anna O's' analysis published in *Studies on Hysteria* does not tally with the facts, and he calls into question Breuer's written record of this case history. He uses new evidence recovered from the sanatorium where 'Anna O' stayed to suggest that Breuer's version of the analysis is deeply flawed. Hirschmüller's study proved to be the start of a move for the restitution of the female patients whose analyses have been published. Many of these have now been revealed as misrepresentations. This move of restitution started in the 1970s with Dianne Hunter's feminist reading of the doctor/patient relationship of Breuer and 'Anna O'. Hunter considers 'Anna O's' temporary loss of her native German language a rebellion against what Hunter sees as the patriarchy that would

suppress her intelligence. Nevertheless, there is little or no reference to the damaging effects of her mother and this is what I want to open up and explore.

In 2004, Emanuel Berman pieced together the fragmented narrative of Elma Pálos in his initial study of this triadic and complicated situation. Described as a preliminary report on this puzzle, so far the full research project has yet to be published even if completed. No critic has yet made the connection of the shadowy effects of the mother figure to the daughter's mental health, and there has been no detailed attempt to read these case studies as models for the kind of literary triads to be found in James and Nabokov's fiction.

In the following chapters, I develop this theory of the triadic relationship and the role of damaging mothers, and examine the methods used in James's and Nabokov's portrayal of the adverse effect on the daughter's speech. I situate the literature and the psychology chronologically to measure the two case studies as being amongst the literature, and not separate from it. Chapter 1 highlights the motives in James's life for creating these hostile triads, including his observations on the effect of domineering parenting on his mentally ill sister, Alice. His admiration for his cousin Minny Temple also inspires a contradiction within James who sees womanhood, as opposed to girlhood, as a burden for his young female friends. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 analyse *Watch and Ward*, *Washington Square*, and *The Awkward Age*, respectively. The complex roles each of his fictional daughters take are modelled on his observations of his sister and female friends in whose lives he took a detailed interest. These chapters look to uncover a major preoccupation with the mother figure in these novels and situate them alongside the triadic model that plays a pivotal part in the psychoanalysis. They also explore the 'story of the story'. The author's own edits and revisions as well as critical interpretations of these novels suggest some links between

the fragmentations of the published stories in addition to fragmentation of the daughter's voice.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 explore in detail the case studies of 'Anna O' and the "fragmented" life of Elma Pálos. I look at the effects of their time in psychoanalysis, and the presentation of the mother and her damaging effect on her daughter. In both studies, she severely distorts the progress made by both females and prolongs the already damaging "father"/daughter relationship. The critical interest in both these case studies has previously been generated from a feminist angle, which has drawn heavily on 'Dora'; the emblematic nineteenth century hysteric as the pioneering feminist voice amongst the closed and patriarchal institution of psychoanalysis. My research attempts to breach the sometimes limiting world of feminist theory and find a new way to explore the lives of these women; I use both published and unpublished material to illuminate both the presented and buried material and that which is occluded or concealed.

Chapter 9 looks at Nabokov's 'private tragedy' and explores how this has infiltrated his fiction. Reading over a broad range of material can reveal much about Nabokov's anxiety about Freud's psychoanalysis and his wary regard for James. It will be suggested that both have influenced his work and that the nature of the damaging triads in both the case studies and in James's fiction had not gone unnoticed or ignored by Nabokov. Thus, Chapters 10 and 11 focus on *Lolita* and *Ada or Ardor,* and the triads within these novels.

Shoshana Felman states in *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, that 'While literature is considered as a body of ***language*** – to be ***interpreted*** – psychoanalysis is considered as a body of ***knowledge***, whose competence is called upon ***to interpret***' (1977, 5). This led Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester in ***Freud's Women*** to ask:

> Is a study of psychoanalysis and literature one in which psychoanalysis will be in a position of mastery over the literary text, on the model of an analyst who knows, who achieves mastery over his patient's pathology, her hysteria, her access to femininity? Or will it be a study in which psychoanalysis finds itself subject to the deciphering as any other text, laws and methods which are the esoteric techniques proper to literature, to fictional structures? (471)

It seems that the literary critic is thought to be taking the easy route if they apply psychoanalysis to literature. Felman is concerned with the 'and' (psychoanalysis *and* literature) and the prioritisation of one strategy over another e.g. psychoanalysis as a method needed to reinforce the literature instead of the opposite. This is a concern that lies only with literary critics, as Brooks and Rousseau contend. There has been some attempt by literary critics such as Neil Vickers to make restitution to this.[14] When Rousseau wrote his paper in 1981, he said he would like to see research studies of medical works that use techniques of literary analysis. However, if we accept that psychoanalysis was born out of literature and that it started with fiction, it is not too wild a notion to presume that Freud's purpose was to incorporate science into this fiction.

In my own study, I situate Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov as commentators on their own efforts to achieve a level of mastery over their ability to portray the female patient, in their case, the female character. As Keith Thomas puts it in *History and Literature*, 'If we are to understand the minds of people in the past, to go on reading until we can hear them talking, it is partly to literature that we must turn' (19).

[14] Neil Vickers, 'Coleridge, Moritz and the 'psychological' case history', in *Romanticism*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2007. pp271-280. Vickers argues that Coleridge's discovery of the 'psychological' case history had a profound effect on his creative writing. Coleridge studied psychology and medicine for his own use and not because he was simply absorbing it through the culture.

Part One

Henry James and the Master's Daughters

Chapter One

Henry James and Psychology

James's knowledge of the psychological thought swirling around him would not have been limited. His brother, William, was a psychologist and a follower of German psychology in particular; thus, James would have had access to psychological developments. James and Freud were near contemporaries, and James's close friends had many encounters with mental illness and so sought psychological guidance. James's friend John Hay sought help from Charcôt, one of Freud's teachers in Paris. As James approached his 'Middle Period', neurasthenia, the "American disease," was gaining ground as the 'new' hysteria for men.[1] Wendy Graham suggests that 'nervous diseases were so pervasive at that time that Henry could easily have read about them in *The Nation*, the *Forum, Scribners*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *North American Review*' (159). James wrote many articles and short stories for these journals and we can speculate that he would have read these articles about nervous disorders. Through his sister Alice's attempts to recover her mental health, James would especially be aware of issues of female hysteria and its treatments.

Graham suggests that James's homeland of North East America was regarded as producing more than the usual number of cases of mental illness. She states that:

> Physicians and journalists alike looked to New England for the type of women burdened by morbid conscience, just as they had noted rampant nervous distress in the maids and matrons of the north-eastern corridor...psychiatrists commonly regarded repression as an indigenous feature of the New England personality, a culturally sanctioned but dubious method of coping with emotions. (165)

The female characters in James's novel, *The Bostonians*, certainly bear some of the symptoms attributed to this New England location.

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[1] George M. Beard, *American Nervousness, Its Causes and Consequences* (New York, 1881) pp. 96-129.

Although Freud did not break into the American scene until 1910, academic circles knew of his work before then. William met Freud in 1909 and was supposed to have said to him: 'The future of psychology belongs to you'.[2] Oscar Cargill says there may be some relevance in the similarities between James's short story *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), Alice's mental illness and Breuer and Freud's *Studies on Hysteria*. (244)

James entered psychoanalysis in 1910, first in November and then December, and again in early 1911 where he sought the help of James Jackson Putnam, a follower of Freud's whom he introduced to America as early as 1907. J.J. Putnam founded the neurological clinic in Harvard University and was a close friend of William's: James was aware of Putnam's treatment as early as 1883, where he mentions him in his notebooks. James had previously tried sitz baths, massages, and electrolysis and claimed they did nothing, but Putnam's brand of 'talk therapy' proved to be much more effective. In a letter to Putnam in 1912, James says he wishes 'I were sitting with you again in Marlborough Street (on this basis of improvement only though!) on one of those rather melancholy winter evenings of a year ago'.

James continues:

> However, I am boring you to death (if I am not really interesting you!) and I only risk the former effect to possibly invoke the latter. It's a flood of egotism – but what are the Patient class but egotistic, especially in proportion as it's grateful? You tided me over three or four bad places during those worst months. Now everything is changed and you will after all be certainly glad to hear it, and that I am really, for a still too obese mortal, master of the situation….Collins spent an evening with me in the late autumn and much admired me – as an independent work of art![3]

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[2] André Green, 'The Functions of Writing: Transmission between Generations and Role Assignment within the Family, in Henry James and His Family' *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 75 (1994) 585-608 (p.603). Green does not include a reference for this quote and it is therefore subject to speculation as to whether this meeting between William James and Freud actually occurred.

[3] Ed. Leon Edel, *Henry James*: *The Letters: 1895-1916 v.4* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1984) p. 594 (4 January 1912)

James is obviously indebted to Putnam for his analytical help and he recognises the role the patient plays with his self-conscious display of self-regard. James had also been treated by Joseph Collins who was vehemently anti-Freud, and James here mentions he is aware that his value to Collins is as a work of art only. His interest in the doctor/patient relationship had been explored in some of his novels, and in 1912, he was a patient himself and criticises Collins for his method of healing.

There seems to be a trend shared between the male author who wishes to produce a fragmented female in terms of her character, consciousness, and language, and the psychoanalyst who fragments a narrative and re-forms one to represent the patient. However, the splitting of stories does not stop here. The critical re-presentations of patients such as Bertha Pappenheim and Elma Pálos are further stretched from the original narrative and very few subsequent critics have attempted to find the real sources.

What emerges in James's fiction is a similar portrayal to these patients in his young female characters, who are at times silenced and have difficulty in speaking of their feelings, and at other times realize the consequences of speaking the truth, and are therefore punished for speaking. The emergence at the end of the century of the 'new woman' has been tagged as one reason for this dismal fictional treatment of young girls and women. Male writers had made the 'new woman' into a comic figure, while others viewed her as dangerous, but this view can hardly be a factor in the father figure punishing the daughter figure. At times, it seems that the father's interventions can be seen as protecting the daughter from evils outside the home.

The Climate of the Times

The period after the American civil war provoked according to Michael Kimmel a 'crisis in masculinity' (262). This, and developments in the medical world, led to an explosion and proliferation of ideas that continued to circulate amongst men of medicine, writers and politicians. With regard to medicine doctors embarked on their own quest, if not to the deepest African jungle favoured in fiction of the time, then into the minds and bodies of women. Elaine Showalter observes that 'the shrieking sister – or the prostitute could be turned into a silent body to be observed, measured, and studied, her resistance to convention could be treated as a scientific anomaly or a problem to be solved by medicine' (127). Showalter compares the scientific theorist to the imaginative male writer, and so enter Henry James, who turns some of his female characters into case studies, and pries open their consciousness. James uses the female consciousness as a conduit through which to see the world.

Circulating at the time were novels, pamphlets and political manifestos that tried to retain the older traditions of Victorian fiction. At the same time as the emerging feminist backlash against repressive structure led by Sarah Grand, was Stead's 'The Maiden Tributes of Modern Babylon' (1885), a shocking revelation about the dangers of virile male sexuality. Women also had to contend with the new possibility of sexual disease from a husband, the warnings of sexual predators, the repressive Victorian patriarchal bind, and the possibility of sinking into hysteria. The 'New Woman' emerged at the same time as psychoanalysis: together they were the subject of fiction and social commentary.

Biography and Psychology

André Green, a French psychoanalyst, makes a connection between James's personal conflicts and thoughts on his family, and the creative process. His essay, 'The Functions of Writing: Transmission between Generations and Role Assignment within the Family, in Henry James and His Family'. He states that James's 'essential objective' is the 'chronological conjunction of appropriation (through introspection) and representation (through projection)' (605). Green claims:

> Henry's approach to consciousness was to open up a path which was not that of the ego, or of God, or of abstract reflection: he opted for imagination—in terms of fantasy, conscious and unconscious—using it as his window on the unconscious. I can assert with confidence that the success that accrued to him with the years was due to his having been a great clinician; one who did not merely listen to his character-patients, but who took the analytical setting with him into the world in order to listen to the discourse of life. (603)

Coming from a family of writers, Henry would have been influenced by the philosophy of his father, the psychology of his brother, and the introspection of his sister, as seen in their published writings and diaries. Green sees James's writing as closer to the theories of Freud's than William's own psychological work. Green is interested in James's work from an analytical point of view 'because of the importance it attaches to the non-linguistic' (606). I take this to be a reflection of the silences and omissions present in James's characters, particularly the young daughters of James's novels. Brooks may have a problem with critics of literature using psychoanalysis to interpret a novel, but Green's message is clear in his commitment to the theory that James's family life reflects itself in his writing. I agree with Green and therefore I have presented the main events in James's early years that I see as having caused awareness in James, and the self-awareness these events would bring to his writing.

Family and the Silent Sister

Henry Sr's ideas about life, religion, and a woman's place would have a profound effect on the forming mind of young Henry. Henry Sr. called the institution of marriage into question, causing uproar in the literary magazines circulating at the time. The misguided thought that he advocated free love led people to think he was liberal and forward thinking, but his stance on the education of women remained conservative, and caused Alice a lifetime of depression and anxiety. Seeing Alice suffer at the hands of Henry Sr's ideals may have led to a confusion of Henry's own self-image.

The James family were well acquainted with mental disturbance. Henry Sr. had a mental breakdown in 1844, Alice in 1868, William in 1870, Robertson in 1881, and Henry Jr in 1910, possibly because of his brother William's death. There is a possibility that the children's disturbance stems from a very self-absorbed father. Many of the Jameses' (in particular Henry Sr, William and Henry Jr) letters to each other are notoriously introspective.

Alice's upbringing was of a typical nineteenth century kind, ruled by patriarchy. She was given a certain amount of education and was encouraged to develop an independent mind but she would see her brothers all go off to school, while she had to remain in the suffocating James house. The role as her father's 'substitute wife' was taken. Like Freud, Henry Sr. already had two 'wives': his wife, Mary James, and Mary's sister, Aunt Kate, who also lived with them. He was a father who preached sermons on chastity and the sacredness and purity of women. While Henry and William had a lot of affection for Alice, with Henry's travels abroad, and William's marriage to Alice Howe Gibbons, whose

wedding she did not attend, Alice was also denied the role of carer of either of her two favoured brothers.

Much popular thought at the time was that education and work threatened the mind and stability of young women. Elaine Showalter has written of the hideous results to women of this denial of choice and freedom, and the results in Alice were harsh. She was to experience migraines and violent shaking. She was consigned to her bed as an invalid. She experienced 'rigidity, always in loss of self-control, screaming, splitting headaches, and loss of appetite' (Kaplan, 88). She would be plagued by mental strife all her life, trying out all the experimental cures known at the time to no avail. Habegger says Henry Sr. was known to be guided by the thoughts of Dr. Edward H. Clarke, whose 1873 book of the dubious title: *Sex in Education: A Fair Chance for the Girls*, argued that 'the modern trend towards the education of young women deranged their reproductive system and ignored the natural distinctions between the sexes' (Habegger 1989, 46).

Suicide was on her mind and became an option when Henry Sr gave his permission for Alice to take her life if it became too much. Henry Sr was to starve himself to a slow death when his wife Mary died, and it becomes clear that Henry Jr developed a warped view of death, especially the death of women. Henry Sr was 'completely absorbed in caring' for Alice, and his thoughts were simultaneously on 'the truths of immortal life' (Kaplan, 211). It is almost as if he wished for Alice to sacrifice herself to his Swedenborgian notions and the ideas he spent his life preaching. When James's friends Minny Temple and Lizzie Boott died, some critics have seen James's reaction to their deaths as slightly sinister. Kaplan and Habegger see that James pounced on both Minny and Lizzie's deaths and immediately used the drama to transform them into art. Nevertheless, his views are similar to those of his father on life and women: that their purity and innocence may be tainted by life itself, and

that they are meant for a higher spirituality. James saw that *some* women were not meant for family life, and these seem to have been his thoughts on Alice, Minny, and Lizzie.

Alice's medical record is long in its search for a cure. In November 1866, Alice was sent to the home of orthopaedist Dr. Charles Fayette Taylor, who was opposed to the idea of female education, believing degeneracy and decay in all aspects of society to stem from the over-stimulation of the female mind. According to Habegger, 'He recounted a case history of a girl who showed signs of intermittent languor and irritability [...] On investigation the cause proved to be her occasional visits to a grandmother, "a very intelligent woman", whom the girl "looked forward to seeing"' (1989, 46). In a lecture on this case study, Taylor remarked that once the visits stopped the girl became cheerful again. Habegger sees this case study as a version of Alice's own case history with Dr. Taylor. Alice stayed with Dr Taylor until 1st May of the following year with her Aunt Kate.

In 1889, Alice started keeping a diary, which was to later be published. Here, she could finally write down her thoughts on her illness, which was something she had not discussed hitherto. Her brothers William and Henry both obsessively wrote letters about their own illnesses and bouts of ill health, but Alice was silent until after the death of her parents. She had been reading William's paper, "The Hidden Self,"[4] in which he says the 'nervous victim "abandons" certain portions of his consciousness.'[5] Her reading of William's work seems to trigger introspection and she now wrote about her long repressed feelings for her early life with her parents. In her diary, she wrote of her overwhelming rage felt towards her father:

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[4] William James, 'The Hidden Self', *Scribners* (March, 1890)
[5] *The Diary of Alice James,* ed. by Leon Edel (USA: Northeastern University Press, 1999), (October 26th 1890). Original published 1934.

> As I used to sit immovable reading in the library with waves of violent inclination suddenly invading my muscles taking some one of their myriad forms such as throwing myself out of the window, or knocking off the head of the benignant pater as he sat with his silver locks, writing at his table, it used to seem to me that the only difference between me and the insane was that I had not only all the horrors and suffering of insanity but the duties of doctor, nurse, and strait-jacket imposed upon me, too. (*Diary*, 26 October 1890)

This instance of Alice, as she sits 'immovable' not making a scene, becomes one of James's literary devices. The control exerted by Alice, when clearly experiencing violent urges against her father, becomes a feature of James's daughter characters who experience suffering and rage but control it and do not exhibit this urge: thus no scene occurs.

In 1872, she travelled abroad with Henry and Aunt Kate, and her sense of freedom was to be the greatest of her life. In 1877, a year before her second breakdown, she wrote to her friend Annie Ashburner: 'I am frightened sometimes when I suddenly become conscious of how constantly I dwell in the memory of that summer I spent abroad' (dated 28 February 1877).[6] She would never experience such freedom from mental illness again. Twelve years later, at her lowest, Alice would write in her journal of 'that hideous summer of '78, when I went down to the deep sea, its dark waters closed over me, and I knew neither hope nor peace' (*Diary*, 2 February 1892).

The only respite from her ill health was in her close friendship to Katherine Loring, which developed into a typical 'Boston marriage'. Her mother's death also caused her to experience a degree of normality. Alice was now able to take care of her father and fulfil her role as 'substitute wife' for Henry Sr. Henry Jr observed that 'Alice, I am happy to say, after many years of ill health has been better for the last few months than for a long time;

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[6] *The Death and Letters of Alice James*, ed. by Ruth Bernard Yeazell (Boston: Exact Change Books, 1997)

she is able to look after my father and take care of his house.'[7] Alice took control, moved house and had an extra house built by the ocean. The astute Aunt Kate wrote of Mary James: 'how must she rejoice that to the dear child to whom she gave material existence, she has by her death given spiritual life' (Strouse, 202). Alice even wrote to her brother Robertson's wife, 'Father & I are alone, & very much alone we feel, but we would not either of us have it otherwise' (Yeazell, 22 May 1882, 25).

In Edel's expansive biography on James, he comments on James's attraction to the 'older woman'. The women who were 'strong, domineering and had in them also a streak of hardness, sometimes even cruelty' would appeal to James because, Edel suggests, Henry's mother was also 'hard, firm, sovereign, but more devious' (1962, 357). Edel fleetingly mentions that in James's fiction, 'the mothers of Henry James, for all their maternal sweetness, are strong, determined, demanding, grasping women' (1962, 469). Yet James did not comment on his childhood or adult experiences with his mother in the two volumes of his autobiography. William's son, Harry wrote of his regret that Henry did not include any memories of his mother, when he compiled a collection of William James's letters. In the Introduction, he says:

> But it is all the more unfortunate that her son Henry, who might have done justice, as no one else could, to her good sense and to the grace of her mind and character, could not bring himself to include an adequate account of her in the "Small Boy and Others." To a reader who ventured to regret the omission, he replied sadly, "Oh! my dear Boy – that memory is too sacred!" (9)

Edel asserts that the 'reader' was Harry himself, and he speculates that this comment was an evasion by James to avoid seeing his mother as she really was. James's mother, as portrayed in his novels, could represent his real feelings on dark mother figures.

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[7] Jean Strouse, *Alice James: A Biography* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 202 (Henry James to Mrs. Francis Mathews, 13th February, 1882)

Green suggests that 'There are strong indications that Alice had a powerful fixation on her mother (what she sought in Henry [Jr] was his maternal behaviour towards her)' (599). Alice called her brother 'Henry the patient'. She wrote in her journal:

> I crossed the water and suspended myself like an old woman of the sea round his neck where to all appearances I shall remain for all time…I have never seen an impatient look upon his face or heard an unsympathetic or misunderstanding sound cross his lips. He comes at the slightest sign and hangs on to whatever organ may be in eruption and gives me calm and solace by assuring me that my nerves are his nerves and my stomach his stomach. (March 25th, 1890)

Henry, the patient and sympathetic brother would remain loyal and devoted to Alice until her death in 1892. When Katherine Loring had four copies of Alice's journal printed and bound, Henry became terrified that his private conversations with Alice would be revealed to the public. He insisted on being given the time to edit and alter the diary until he was happy with it, and then burn all four original copies.

Alice's drive to express herself continued up until the moment of her death. Concerning the final entry to Alice's diary, Katherine Loring wrote: 'All through Saturday the 5th and even in the night, Alice was making sentences. One of the last things she said to me was to make a correction in the sentence of March 4th "moral discords and nervous horrors"' (*Diary*, 232). Henry found a need to edit Alice's diary. Henry needed to protect his personal thoughts and previous conversations with Alice, and to protect those of his family. There is the possibility that he may have needed to suppress any unattractive entries on Mary James. This is one of many possible analogies between James's own impulse to silence the voice of the young woman and that of his characters in his fiction.

The Minny Effect

The orphaned daughter of Henry Sr's sister, Minny Temple spent a lot of time with the James family during school holidays. Henry admired Minny's spirit, and especially her antagonistic ways towards Henry Sr. Shortly before her death in 1870, Minny wrote to James of an intended trip she wished to take to California to see her sister. Her letter speaks volumes about her affection for her cousin, and undertones of her doubts of seeing him again: 'Think of me, over the continent. "When shall we meet again, / Dearest & Best, /Thou going Easterly, / I, to the West?" as the song saith' (17th November 1869).[8]

When Minny died, James took it upon himself to complete what he saw as incomplete. In a letter to Grace Norton, he wrote:

> Poor Minny was essentially incomplete & I have attempted to make my young woman more rounded, more finished. In truth everyone, in life, is incomplete, & it is the mark of art that in reproducing them one feels the desire to fill them out, to justify them, as it were. (Habegger, 1989, 28 December 1880,126)

James took what he thought was originally fragmented, and attempted to piece the shards together. This letter was written ten years after Minny's death when James was transferring Minny's image into characters in his novels.

Habegger studied twenty-three of Minny's original letters to John Chapman Gray, a young law teacher at Harvard. After her death, John Gray sent these letters to Alice, who gave them to Henry Jr. Habegger found that James, who included some of these letters in the second volume of his autobiography, had changed some of her words, her exclamations and her slang, to a more refined and appropriate language, that suited James, but not the exuberant and blunt Minny. These letters to Gray were of the non-romantic kind, and she found great pleasure in his non-introspective letters. Clearly, Minny had enough

[8] Unpublished Letter from www.dearhenryjames.org

introspection within the James clan, and found light relief in Gray's tone and her own very informal repartee. A more serious, less flirty, and less playful Minny emerges from the letters rewritten by James.[9] Her ill health made her housebound for much of her adult life, and writing and receiving letters were often the only means of expression and voice Minny had. James took Minny's letters and her image and recast them, thinking he could provide a memory of Minny with a more complete personality.

Critics such as Habegger and Kaplan have seen James's written response to his mother upon learning of Minny's death as 'inhumane and sinister' (Habegger, 1989, 145). According to Kaplan, James wanted to know all the small details surrounding her death with 'novelistic enthusiasm' (119). James was in England when Minny died, and was unaware she was seriously ill. When she died of consumption on 8th March 1870, he was still awaiting a letter from her. Minny had written repeatedly to James about her hopes of joining him in his European adventures but thus far had been unable due to illness. In a letter to his mother, he said:

> No one who ever knew her can have failed to look at her future as a sadly insoluble problem – & we almost all had imagination enough to say, to murmur at least, that life – poor narrow life – contained no place for her. How all her conduct and character seem to have pointed to this conclusion – how profoundly inconsequential, in her history, continued life would have been! (*Life in Letters*, 26 March 1870, 36)

There are parts of his letter where he exults in her being transformed into the higher being he imagined her to be:

> She has gone where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage! No illusions and no disillusions – no sleepless nights and no ebbing strength. The more I think of her the more perfectly satisfied I am to have her translated from this changing realm of fact to the steady realm of thought. There she may bloom into a beauty more radiant than our dull eyes may avail to contemplate.

[9] For further reading on James's alterations see Alfred Habegger, 'Henry James's Rewriting of Minny Temple's Letters' *American Literature*, 58.2 (May, 1986), 150-180, (p.159).

The reverent language places Minny on a purer plane, where she will not be hindered by the burdens of marriage. James's thoughts are similar to the ideas of Henry Sr, who also put women on a higher spiritual plane with their purity and yet weaker abilities to live.

In reading the whole of this letter to his mother, it is difficult to agree with Habegger and Kaplan, who have seen James's reaction to Minny's death as slightly perverse. The letter is not full of the patronising tone on Minny's life that these critics have made out. It is clear he feels numb and says:

> You can imagine all I feel. Minny seemed such a breathing immortal reality that the mere statement of her death conveys little meaning; really to comprehend it I must wait – we must all wait – till time brings with it the poignant sense of loss & irremediable absence […] But who complains that she's gone or would have her back to die more painfully? [...] It comes home to me with irresistible power, the sense of how much I knew her & how much I loved her.

However, James also recognises his morbid interest in her death when he says 'I feel absolutely *vulgarly* eager for any fact whatever.' (His italics)

The years between 1870 and 1914 did not change James's feelings towards Minny, although his fictitious portrayal of young girls would develop enormously. In the second volume of his autobiography, *Notes of a Son and Brother* (1914), he dedicates the last few chapters specifically to Minny. His last words are of her and they are particularly poignant in that he feels that with Minny's death, so ended his youth.

> Death, at last, was dreadful to her; she would have given anything to live – and the image of this, which was long to remain with me, appeared so of the essence of tragedy that I was in the far-off aftertime to seek to lay the ghost by wrapping, a particular occasion aiding, in the beauty and dignity of art. The figure that was to hover as the ghost has at any rate been of an extreme pertinence, I feel, to my doubtless too loose and confused general picture, vitiated perhaps by the effort to comprehend more than it contains. Much as this cherished companion's presence among us had represented for William and myself – and it is on ***his*** behalf I especially speak – her death made a mark that must stand here for a too waiting conclusion. We felt it together as the end of our youth. (479)

Here, over forty years later, he explains his confused state upon learning of her death, and that writing her 'ghost' into his novels was his way of making sense of this. I cannot see anything sinister about his use of his memory of Minny, and if anything this paragraph points to the haunting nature of Minny in Henry's writing and his inability to fully comprehend his own feelings of her death.[10] Edel has seen Henry's treatment of Minny's death as having a form of 'vampirism' in which James sucks the life out of Minny and places her in his novels. James's feelings as shown in his autobiography seem to contradict this assumption and I see James's "use" of Minny in his novels as arising from an event in his life that affected him deeply. Freud's theory of the repetition compulsion can certainly be seen in James's novels, in his attempts to cling to the memory of Minny and as an attempt to find a way for him to deal with her death.

Henry James's Writing Biography

Reviewing James's novels chronologically can lead to biographical speculation. There is evidence of an unfolding enrichment of the fictional themes and of James's personal place in his novels. The mother figure in his early writing begins as a detached guardian but in James's later writings, she begins to become much more menacing.

The fiction of the mid-nineteenth century by some women writers has a surprising theme, noted by Habegger:

[10] Interestingly, Habegger has jumped on James's last words here, and has speculated on the relationship between William and Minny. See 'New Light on William James and Minny Temple' *The New England Quarterly* 60.1 (March, 1987), pp. 28-53

> In every single novel, even though the heroine learns to take care of herself in a very rough unjust world, the love she comes to feel for the boy or man who will in the end become her husband first arises before she attains adulthood and independence. (1989, 17)

The man is always older and more experienced, and sometimes the lover of the heroine's mother, as in James's novels *What Maisie Knew,* and *The Awkward Age* and in Nabokov's *Lolita*. It could be suggested that James and Nabokov take this theme from women novelists and appropriate this 'female' subject.

In the 1860s when James started writing reviews of these novels, he wrote of Louisa May Alcott's *Moods*: "We are utterly weary of stories about precocious little girls. In the first place, they are in themselves disagreeable and unprofitable objects of study, and in the second they are always the precursors of a not less profitable middle-aged lover."[11] Clearly, James changed his mind, or decided this theme needed more investigation, because he repeatedly writes about this extraordinary relationship between the young girl and the older and fatherly male. When it came for James to write novels of his own, the events in his own life spurred him into revisiting this relationship with himself in mind, not as the middle-aged lover, but as the girl.

In his novels, he repeatedly constructs a heroine who has been silenced by parental figures. We find a similarity between this possible obsessive need to create and then re-create this triadic parental and daughter relationship throughout his works, and Freud's theory of the repetition compulsion: a revisit to something that has not been dealt with in an attempt to control the memory.[12]

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[11] 'North American Review 101' July 1865. In Louisa May Alcott, *Moods*, ed. by Sarah Elbert (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991) p. 219

[12] 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920). Freud's theory of the repetition compulsion stems from the story of a boy who would throw a wooden reel from his cot and say "Fort" (Gone) and then reel it back and say

In the late nineteenth century, male discourses began to emerge, challenging the 'new woman' status, but also exploring the role of parents in the bringing up of these new women. Psychoanalysis began to emerge at the same time as the psychological novel, and with the same concerns. James's own language was very close to psychological language; he can therefore be seen as writing not only in parallel but also adjacent to the psychoanalysts who produced case studies of their female patients. In the two genres of writing, the fictional and the analytical, female characters and patients are part of a narrative that has been constructed and represented by the author/analyst. The stories that emerge from the writings of the psychoanalysts who treated Elma Pálos and Bertha Pappenheim corrupt a "true" narrative, and the original story is hard to decipher. Works by critics, authors of psychology and feminist critics have attempted to delve into and uncover their story, but this critical attention has sometimes been itself guilty of ignoring evidence. The neglect of original documents and imposing interpretative models to fit their own story has tainted the supposed original story of these patients, leading to unintended misrepresentation.

A possible theme of James's fiction is that of the father figure protecting the female, with the author thinking the young girl is safer with the father figure, fragmenting her speech to the point of reliance on the father figure. But it is not just other male predators whom the father figure protects the girl from, but the mother figure, who, as we will see in the case studies of Elma and Bertha, plays a dangerous role to the detriment of the mental health of the patient. The longevity of the father figure and the daughter's relationship is often

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"Da" (There). This "Fort-da" episode is interpreted by Freud as a game, where the child can gain mastery over the loss of a favourite toy which replaced the absence of the mother. As a way for children to come to terms with unpleasurable experiences, Freud also relates this to painful and traumatic experiences in war, where soldiers keep revisiting these experiences through hallucinations or dreams as a way of coming to terms with it. Freud also comments on the use of this compulsion within novels and cinema.

engineered and sustained by the mother. The uneasy closeness and complex triangles that emerge between characters in James's fiction find their birth in his novel, *Watch and Ward*. James is able to express and explore, through the daughter and father figure, his own psychology, family history, and his observations and feelings towards Minny and his sister. He can also examine the strange and yet intimate relationship formed between doctor and patient that was to emerge and become prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century with the emergence and growth of psychoanalysis.

By repeatedly writing versions of this mother/daughter/father figure triangle James is attempting, I would argue, to find some sort of mastery over his own feelings of muteness in his writing and his own relationship with his father and mother. He shows his desire to protect Minny, in his attempts to preserve her name with the revision of her many outspoken letters, some of which he included in *Notes of a Son and Brother*. So we see a repetition of this triangle in *Washington Square*, *What Maisie Knew*, *The Awkward Age*, *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Bostonians*, using language and speech as ways to interpret the life of these girls who are placed between the innocence of girlhood, and the bold and challenging role of the 'new woman'.

The pivotal moment that captured the young James's imagination was a scene he described in his memoir, *A Small Boy and Others* (1913). Minny had run to her mother when her father insisted that she go to bed, and her mother had responded: 'Come now, my dear; don't make a scene – I insist on your not making a scene!' (185). James says 'that was all the witchcraft the occasion used, but the note was none the less epoch-making [...] It seemed freighted to sail so far, it told me so much about life. Life at these intensities clearly became 'scenes'' (186). What becomes clear is that at this moment, when James sees Minny attempting to make a tempestuous scene in front of the family, it spurred him to

write novels where people did not make scenes and avoided them at all costs, but the knowledge that they could happen at any minute was embedded in his texts. It is Minny's mother who insists she not make the scene and in effect attempts to silence her and so this episode is a description of a non-scene. The idea of the non-scene was also present in Alice's diary when she describes her feelings of rage towards her father but not acting on these emotions. James realises that Minny's non-scene is the birth of his writing career when he writes: 'The mark had been made for me and the door flung open' (186).

Chapter 2 *Watch and Ward*

The Original of Nora

Watch and Ward was written in 1870 and published in instalments in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in January 1871. Written during the mourning period after Minny Temple's death, James's first novel is preoccupied with the subject of young girls and their education, a common theme in his later novels. He is interested in their learning experience in a society that values manners and wealth; and with the situation of the common overlap between father and guardian in Victorian fiction.[1] Although a novella of less than two hundred pages, this first attempt by James to narrate the plight of a young girl is filled with linguistic mystery.

Both Habegger and Kaplan have been struck with James's later feelings towards this early novella, and see its exclusion from the New York Edition, the twenty-four volume collection of most of his works with prefaces written and published in 1907-1909, as a sign that he was perhaps embarrassed by this work and tried to forget its existence. However, *Washington Square* and *The Europeans*, and even *The Bostonians* were also excluded from this collection. In a letter to James Thomas Fields, 15th November 1870, James wrote of *Watch and Ward* 'Perhaps you will content yourself with my assurance that the story is one of the greatest works of "this or any age"' (*Life in Letters*, 41). To his close friend Grace Norton he wrote, 27th November 1871:

> Poor Roger, Nora, the Signora *e tutti quanti*. It is hardly worth while now, attempting to enlighten you upon any point of the master-piece in which the former creations figure;

[1] See Alfred Habegger, (1989) for a detailed study of 'The Agonist' writers who use the guardian/ward motif, including Louisa May Alcott and her novel *Moods*. Other writers of this period who also use this relationship in their works are Dickens, (*Little Dorrit* and *Bleak House*) and Nathanial Hawthorne, a major inspiration for James.

> by the time you get this you will have perused it to the bitter end – & you will have been confirmed or confuted as fate & occasion decree. But if it has beguiled a few moments of your dolorous Germanic half-hours & given you a theme for a moment's thought or talk – "the author will not have laboured in vain." Really, I'm not writing a preface; I merely wish to thank you beforehand for any sort of final sentiment you may entertain on the subject. (*Life in Letters*, 42)

At this early stage, he sees his novel as an accomplishment, even if his effusive statements on his first work are those of protective self-mockery, but as he does not write a preface in the New York Edition, he makes plain that neither does he wish to here. The styles of *Watch and Ward* and *The Bostonians* for example, make authorial intentions clear, and so do not require the same kind of preface James was to give his other novels. Part of James's prefaces are intended to draw the reader to certain parts of the novel that perhaps they would have glossed over had they not been made aware of it. With the development of James's style, the bluntness of expression seen in *Watch and Ward* gradually faded to develop into what is now known as the 'Jamesian tone', that requires close reading from the reader to make sense of the underlying plot or even to discover it.

For its publication in book form 1878, James revised the novella producing an altered and more ambiguous Nora. There are parallels between this revision of the daughter's character by James, and the silences and omissions found in the female case studies in the psychoanalytic circles.

The story starts with Roger Lawrence having been rejected by Isabel Morton for the second time, for her hand in marriage. Roger is twenty-nine when the novel starts. Kaplan likens Roger's appearance and mannerisms to James's own. Roger decides to turn his back on the thought of marriage but fate brings him the chance to adopt and raise a young girl as his own. He happens one day to be in a hotel when a man who has previously begged him for money shoots himself leaving his daughter, Nora, orphaned and alone. Roger, feeling

some responsibility for her predicament decides to raise her in the manner of a lady, and soon realises his earlier dreams of marriage can come true. He brings up Nora with the intention of making her a suitable wife, but predatory and calculating as this may sound, Roger is not a cold-hearted man and his conscience is often pricked by the question of whether he has a right to do this.

As Nora grows prettier, she attracts Roger's cousin Hubert, and her own long lost cousin George. Both are presented as dubious figures who see value in Nora, either for the money Roger bestows on her, or as a pretty object to own and look at. When Nora learns of Roger's plan she flees first to George, whom she comes to see for the vagabond he is, and then to Hubert, whose hidden sexual exploits are intriguing in themselves to the reader, before she finally realises Roger is the only man with a heart, and therefore will have hers as well. Along the way, Mrs Keith née Morton appears again and whisks our heroine off to Rome; and an awkward mother and daughter relationship of sorts develops between the two.

Love triangles in fiction and the psychoanalytical world are of course not uncommon[2] and here, we see one of George attempting to claim Nora's affections and battling with Roger; and another of Hubert, when he interrupts the equilibrium between Nora and Roger. Although Hubert initially sees Nora as somewhat unladylike, she blossoms while travelling in Rome with Mrs Keith and comes back to enchant him.

Interestingly Hubert has his own triadic relationship with his fiancée and her mother. The first hint of this triangle is when Nora has made her own way in the dark to hear Hubert's service at his church. While she waits for him she notices 'Two ladies were lingering near,

[2] See Susan Cheever, *American Bloomsbury: Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry David Thoreau. Their Lives, Their Loves, Their Work.* (London and New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), for insight into the love triangles of this Concord community of writers, who started a literary renaissance and became an inspiration for future writers such as Henry James. Cheever speculates that Nathaniel Hawthorn's love triangle in *The Scarlet Letter* was based on the love affairs in this circle.

apparently mother and daughter…The younger one was extremely pretty, and looked like a little Jewess…she eyed our heroine rather severely as they passed' (93). Later, when Nora flees first Roger and then George, she runs to Hubert, and realises he is already engaged to this girl. At that moment, the door is flung open and the girl and her mother enter. In Hubert's triangle, the mother is a passive figure, who keeps well in the daughter's background. The daughter, although having a haughty demeanour, seems to love Hubert for his authoritative tone. When she makes a scene in front of Nora, Hubert responds: '"Good God, Amy! Hold your tongue, – I command you"…"Oh, did you hear that?" she cried. "That's how I like him. Please say it again!"' (194) In this early work James portrays mothers as silent docile creatures and daughters as precocious but yielding to patriarchy.

There is another mother/daughter/father triangle which plays out differently to Hubert's and centres on Mrs. Keith, Nora, and Roger. The original motif of father figure and daughter does not seem to have any longevity in this novella, and indeed in many of James's novels, without the mysterious and often dangerous figure of the mother. This triangle shows the mother to have a conniving power over the whole triadic affair that affects the life of the daughter and often plays itself out in the forms of disrupting the speech of the daughter.

Throughout the novel, Roger needs reassurance from Hubert and Mrs Keith that his investment, Nora, will become something of value, not just to him, but also to other people. After his rejection by Mrs Keith, then called Miss Morton, he writes to her telling her about this investment, and his plans for Nora to become his future wife. Initially the reader supposes his letter is ignored, for Miss Morton's rejection of Roger and subsequent marriage may have blotted out any memories and interest in Roger she may have. It is only at the end of the novella that we see she has kept this letter and shows it to Nora, which has

the contrary effect of eliciting Nora's departure. Until this point, Mrs Keith has done everything in her power to engineer the marriage of Roger and Nora. It is unclear as to why Mrs Keith kept this letter, and after she does show Nora, she seems to realise the danger of her actions for 'Mrs Keith was frightened at her work' (153).

Mrs Keith, we are told, is an 'object of mystical veneration' (85) for Nora. Nora suspects the nature of the previous relationship of Mrs. Keith and Roger and wishes Mrs Keith had in fact become Mrs Lawrence: "She may be still. I wish she would!" (94). This is an ambiguous statement, as at this point Nora has no idea about Roger's plans for her, and so the reader may assume that through the marriage of Roger and Mrs Keith, she would become guardian of Nora also.

When Nora first meets Mrs Keith, she believes she is being 'inspected and appraised' and Mrs Keith uses terms of commerce and finance. She says to Roger "I will guard your interest" (87). Roger and Mrs Keith see Nora as capital for his future, and her future social commitments. Mrs. Keith is jealous of Roger's guardianship over Nora, and persuades Roger to let her have Nora for a year, in which time she will take her away to Europe and 'attend to the profits' (87). Mrs Keith sees a certain charm in Nora that she wishes to hone and make use of in her own social circle. The relationship initially started between the two women is one where Nora takes the subservient role as James mentions that she was 'made to sit down at Mrs. Keith's feet' (87). The narrator, who is our only interpreter of Nora's conscience, tells us:

> She valued the young girl for her social uses…Between these two though there was little natural sympathy, there was a wondrous exchange of caresses and civilities. They had quietly judged each other and sat serenely encamped in her estimate as in a strategical position. Nevertheless I would have trusted neither lady's account of the other. Nora, for perfect fairness, had too much to learn, and Mrs. Keith too much to unlearn…She strove to repair her one notable grievance against fate by treating Nora as a daughter. (124)

Mrs. Keith uses Nora's wealth and beauty to climb the ladder of society, but also to satisfy her own maternal needs. James's metaphor here is military and the narrator is decisive in his opinions of both women. However, the characterisation is not quite of the calibre of James's later untrustworthy mother figures.

The last triadic relationship concerns Roger's battle to erase the distasteful memory of Nora's parentage. He sees her humble beginnings as somehow tainting her personality, something James and his brother William worried about in their own troubled ancestry. A conversation with Roger about his role in her life raises issues about her identity. The novel only scratches at the surface of Nora's inner torment surrounding this issue. Her character is the first draft of James's future fictional daughters. It is only in later novels, with Maisie, Nanda, and Verena, that James explores in depth the issues of parentage, the identity of a parentless daughter, and of how the daughter responds to a parent who has given her up.

When Nora brings her father and mother up for discussion, Roger wishes to silence her:

> Roger frowned; the conversation had taken just such a turn as he had often longed to provoke, but now it was disagreeable to him. "O, come," he said; "I have done simply my duty to my little girl."
> "But, Roger," said Nora, staring with expanded eyes, "I am not your little girl."
> His frown darkened; his heart began to beat.
> "Don't talk nonsense!" he said.
> "But, Roger, it is true. I am no one's little girl. Do you think I have no memory? Where is my father? Where is my mother?"
> "Listen to me," said Roger sternly. "You must not talk of such things." (44)

And later: "Roger, Roger, I am no one's child!" (44) The memory that there was a paternal figure before Roger makes him uneasy and threatens his own authority over Nora. He wishes to erase this previous father, and sees his adoption of Nora as a birth of a *new* daughter, one whose life starts with Roger. Nora is blunt with her words and does not hold back her thoughts. Nora's childhood had been set amongst music halls and she has performed in them, something Roger wishes to erase from her manner.

At the end when Nora flees Mrs Keith's house after Roger's proposal, 'She seemed to feel about her, as she went, the old Bohemianism of her childhood; she was once more her father's daughter' (157). However, this state of mind is only temporary. As easily as she feels the spirit of her father, she also feels the spirit of Roger. The life Roger has given her has infiltrated her personality and this difference is apparent in her dealings with George. When she stays in the house he has lodged her in, the reader notices Nora's sense of the refinement that she has been brought up to appreciate: 'Half an hour later he knocked at her door; quite too loudly, she thought, for good taste'(183). Living with Roger has given Nora the manners and mind required in order to be a part of high society, and the year abroad under the ministrations of Mrs Keith has left its mark on her speech and sense of propriety. Roger's metaphorical giving birth to Nora has succeeded; he has managed to partly erase the 'bohemianism' Nora wishes to cling to.

The Role of the Father

Throughout the novel, Roger debates with himself about what his actual role is. With his aim to turn Nora into the perfect wife, there is an overlap of the guardian figure with the lover.

Early on in the novel, he proposes for a second time to Miss Morton, and while visiting there is an intriguing description of her young niece:

> Miss Morton's little niece was a very pretty child; her hair was combed out into a golden cloud, which covered her sloping shoulders. She kept her place beside her aunt, clasping one of the latter's hands, and staring at Lawrence with that sweet curiosity of little girls. There glimmered mistily in the young man's brain a vision of a home-scene in the future, – a lamp-lit parlour on a winter night, a placid wife and mother wreathed in household smiles, a golden-haired child, and in the midst, his sentient self, drunk with possession and gratitude. As the clock struck nine the little girl was sent to bed, having been kissed by her aunt and rekissed – or unkissed shall I say? – by her aunt's lover. (10)

This scene captures a vision of a comfortable homely family life for Roger with a golden-haired child and wife, and it is interesting that it is not Miss Morton who inspires such a picture but the young niece. Her 'sloping shoulders' and 'sweet curiosity' excite Roger's imagination and the child is a possession and centre of this scene, the wife remaining 'placid' and in the background. The golden-haired niece takes her position next to Miss Morton, as does Nora later in the story, when Miss Morton is the widowed Mrs Keith. The idea of being 'unkissed' is questioned by the narrator, as if Roger does not merely 'rekiss' the girl, and cover and copy Miss Morton's kiss, but 'unkisses', as if to undo the kiss, replace with his own, or even to 'un'-cover something, to 'undress' or 'unmask'. The eroticized and highlighted effects of Roger's action serve to dim our view of a previously comic and innocent Roger.

Robert Gale suggests that the imagery used in *Watch and Ward* is 'blatant in its unconscious sexual overtones' (47) and his view seems to describe this passage well:

> An irresistible sense of her childish sweetness, of her tender feminine promise stole softly into his pulses. A dozen caressing questions rose to his lips…Was it the expugnable instinct of paternity? Was it the restless ghost of his buried hope? He thought of his angry vow the night before to live only for himself and turn the key on his heart. "From the lips of babes and sucklings…" – he softly mused. Before twenty-four hours had elapsed a child's fingers were fumbling with the key. (17)

In his introductory essay to the novel, Edel says that he sees these passages as 'innocent erotic' statements and suggests '*Watch and Ward* is naïve from beginning to end' (6). I do not see any of James's sexually ambiguous language as unconscious. This passage describes Roger's realisation that he could adopt a young Nora and his biblical words are a portent of his idea to mould Nora into his own perfect wife.[3] To implement the idea that

[3] Quote from Matthew 21.16: 'And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?' (KJV) One of

Roger wishes to raise Nora in a certain way, his very name has been made ambiguous. The eroticised derivative of Roger[4] (renowned spearman), make his character at once highly charged with a controlling power, and also, the text notes, 'highly comical in a sleek young bachelor turning nurse and governess' (20). Roger's at once passive and harmless persona with his slightly disturbing view of young girls changes the atmosphere of the novel. Underneath the often comical tones and paternal instincts of Roger lies an almost Nabokovian darkness.

This image of the lock and key is used by Freud when describing his case history of 'Dora' and his desire to 'pick-lock' his way into 'Dora's' unconscious. Coincidentally, James seems to have had the image of the lock and key in his mind as a central theme to this novella. Here Roger is not turning the key on the child's mind, but James has the child, delicately and erotically fumbling with the key to Roger's previously closed heart. Another 'key' episode occurs with obvious sexual overtones:

> While Hubert's answer lingered on his lips, the door opened and Nora came in. Her errand was to demand the use of Roger's watch-key; her own having mysteriously vanished. She had begun to take out her pins and muffled herself for this excursion in a merino dressing-gown of sombre blue. Her hair was gathered for the night into a single massive coil, which had been loosened by the rapidity of her flight along the passage. Roger's key proved a complete misfit, so that she had recourse to Hubert's. It hung on the watch-chain which depended from his waistcoat, and some rather intimate fumbling was needed to adjust it to Nora's diminutive timepiece. (83)

The 'watch-key' is a watch winder and Nora has dressed herself in night attire in sexualised anticipation. While Roger cannot find his key (a Freudian reading would find him emasculated and impotent) Hubert has his key in permanent view, dangling from his

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the meanings of this passage is Jesus' worry that children grow up to imitate the imperfect, thus Roger's quoting of this phrase is ironic and also hints at the darker personality that James tried to revise, explored further in this chapter.

[4] The obvious fictional inspiration for the name comes from Nathanial Hawthorne's Roger Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter*, who acts out revenge on his wife for her adultery. The revisions of 1878 mask the darker side of James's Roger.

waistcoat, and after highly sexualised 'fumblings' fits it into Nora's watch, in a stark metaphor of intercourse. The 'Ward' of the title, does not just represent Roger's desire to guard over Nora until adulthood, but the OED says it also means 'any of the internal ridges or bars in a lock which prevent the turning of any key without corresponding grooves'. At this point, it is Hubert who 'Wards' over Nora and not Roger.

This metaphorical and at the same time blunt language is typical of early James who wishes to avoid offending his audience, and at the same time permits a certain erotic subtext through his characters and plot.[5] Susan Kappeler observes that:

> Leon Edel has seen in this situation an analogy between James's novel and Nabokov's *Lolita*, but this seems to me to be misleading. There is very little overt sexuality in Roger's relationship with Nora in her early years. (58)

A close reading of even the first passages when Nora and Roger meet would counter this claim: 'An irresistible sense of her childish sweetness, of her tender feminine promise, stole softly into his pulses' (16). Lynda S. Boren sees a linguistic comparison with *Lolita*:

> The splitting of voices in this tale between the libidinous urges of the body and the repressiveness of decorum is characteristic of the erotic literature, which tends to be exaggeratedly analytic in the portrayal of passion. A similar technique produces the disjunctive narrative found in ***Watch and Ward***. There is frequently a Humbert Humbert aura to James's obsessive male characters, whose voices and metaphorical fantasies come tantalizingly close to the immediacy of the first-person. (22)

In the 'watch-key' scene, Roger, despite his ambiguous status and possible similarities to a Humbert Humbert character, is the one from whom Nora demands the 'key', but because he is unable to produce the desired implement, she has to turn to Hubert. Roger, here at least, is seen as safe, and it is Hubert who becomes a possible threat to Nora's innocence.

The text even indicates that Roger and Hubert share some sort of secret concerning Hubert's romantic preferences: '"Take Care!" said Hubert. "She is only a child." Roger

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[5] For more on James's awareness of his audience and his wishes to please them see *Delicate Pursuit: Discretion in Henry James and Edith Wharton* by Jessica Levine. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002)

looked at him a moment. "My dear fellow, you are a hypocrite"' (84). In addition, Roger's last telling words of the novel are "My dear Nora, what have *we* to do with Hubert's young girls?" (197) According to Hubert and the narrator there is only one young girl, Hubert's fiancée, and she is a young woman, but submerged in the text, there is the suggestion that Hubert lives a vague and seemingly unwholesome parish life.

Roger then continues to try to erase Nora's memories of her past in the hope that she will think her life had started with him. As if he had given her life in a maternal vision: 'He wished her life to date from the moment he had taken her home' (22). In an effort to fulfil his role responsibly Roger becomes an avid reader of literature about adolescence: 'He plunged into a course of useful reading, and devoured a hundred volumes on education, on hygiene, on morals, on history' (25). His attempts to place a different history and culture on to Nora are almost descriptions of violent rape: 'He determined to drive the first nail with his own hands, to lay the smooth foundation-stones of Nora's culture' (25).

However, throughout his guardianship of Nora, Roger feels she has a private world he cannot enter. By trying to erase her memories, he wants to give her new ones that involve only him. But at times he wonders if she is hiding her thoughts, his simplest fear being that she is merely more intelligent than himself: 'Then, meeting her intelligent eyes, he would fancy that she was wiser than he knew; that she was mocking him or judging him, and counterplotting his pious labours with elfish subtlety' (27).

Roger may be confused as to his role but Nora is clear who he is and is not, and she makes this obvious to him: '"What are you? Neither my brother, nor my father, nor my uncle, nor my cousin, – nor even, by law, my guardian"' (51), and '"He is not my papa. I have had one papa; that's enough"' (64). When Roger is unable to decide on whether she should call

him Mr Lawrence or Papa, it is Nora who decides and names him, opting for the familiar 'Roger'.

Despite Nora's idea that she is merely Roger's 'best friend' (64), she does feel some sort of strangeness in their domestic arrangements. '"Roger," she said after a pause, "has it never struck you as very strange that we should be living together in this way?"' (51), and equally swiftly she pronounces, '"if you don't wish it, I promise never, never, never to marry, but to be yours alone, – yours alone!"' (53)

As soon as Nora returns from Rome, Roger can see now she is no longer a child, and his role must change: '"For that purpose I must cease to be, in all personal matters, her guardian." "She must herself forget her wardship"' says Mrs Keith (146). When Roger proposes to Nora, he believes he can read her mind and speaks the words she has not yet spoken: '"I will do anything for you on earth" – ***but that*** was unspoken, yet Roger heard it' (152). It appears that Nora would have married Roger, albeit out of gratitude, if she had known about her bondage. She feels the secret was his betrayal. She thinks: 'Why had he never told her that she wore a chain? Why, when he took her, had he not drawn up his terms and made his bargain? She would have kept the bargain to the letter; she would have taught herself to be his wife' (155). The idea that a pre-adolescent Nora would have consented to be Roger's wife is implausible, and it is with the benefit of adult hindsight that Nora decides that she would have kept her side of this bargain had it been known to her. Yet, as Boren points out,

> The pathos of Nora's life is configured not only in her father's impoverishment and attendant suicide dilemmas but also in the incestuous power he exerts over her, a power that James conceptualises in metaphorical motif. (30)

From the beginning, shrouded in metaphorical mystery, lies an already warped father/daughter relationship. Nora's father, upon hearing that Roger will not give him the one hundred dollars he so desperately needs declares he will slit his own throat. Later that night, Roger hears gunshots and runs into the next room where he sees a young Nora, standing in her flimsy nightdress weeping over her father's dead body. He has shot himself in the head, after attempting to kill Nora first. The narrator tells us the story, not Nora, and we learn that

> The father had come in early in the evening, in great trouble and excitement, and had made her go to bed. He had kissed her and cried over her, and, of course, made her cry. Late at night she was aroused by feeling him again at her bedside, kissing her, fondling her, raving over her. (15)

The incestuous language also takes on the genre of doomed love with a double killing, but Nora does not die and escapes the bullet. The sexualised language tells the reader that Nora has already experienced the type of incestuous relationship Roger wishes them to have. When Nora, in her adult life, admits that she would have married Roger if she had known about Roger's plans for her, it is perhaps not too far removed from the truth, considering this early life lived with an unsuitable parent and the strange relationship with fathers she would have already developed.

Nora's Voice

In *Watch and Ward* Nora is often to be heard or described as shrieking or emitting shrill high-pitched sounds within her speech. We can see that James is aware of the psychological ground being covered regarding hysterical shrieking women at this time and acknowledges its cause.

In James's much later novel, *The Golden Bowl*, Maggie notices something odd in Charlotte's voice.

> The high voice went on; the quaver was doubtless for conscious ears only, but there were verily thirty seconds during which it sounded, for our young woman, like a shriek of a soul in pain. Kept up a minute longer it would break and collapse – . (400)

Melissa Valiska Gregory says this 'shriek' pinpoints some of James's 'preoccupations' including

> The disturbing connection between aesthetic and sexual domination, the ambiguous power of wielding and withholding language, and the troubling, often elusive relationship between melodramatic modes of external presentation and monologic representations of inner feeling. (146)

Of this scene she says that the 'shriek' is the sound of 'the misery of Charlotte's wretched marriage' and 'emerges as no more than a tremulous vibration audible only to the most alert listeners.'

> Her compulsive lecturing permits the momentary acknowledgement of her pain but presents her from expressing it fully, as even the slightest hint of her profound unhappiness threatens to shatter her voice altogether. Straining to express the true depth of her despair, 'the high coerced quaver' of Charlotte's *cicerone* patter dramatizes the fragility and ultimate failure of language. (146)

In the light of Dianne Hunter's powerful study of female language, Charlotte's 'shriek' could be seen as a mode of rebellious expression, and not one of repression.[6] The very fact that these girls and women are shrieking at all suggests a very vocal and loud means of expressing emotion, even if it is pain, as Maggie Verver presumes.

The first sound Roger hears from Nora is a 'loud, shrill cry' (12). He hurries towards the noise and sees 'a little girl, in her nightdress, her long hair on her shoulders, shrieking and wringing her hands' (12), in a romantic but gothic image of a helpless girl-child in distress.

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[6] See 'Anna O' chapter of this work.

Her first words are '"Father"'. Roger's next action is to open his arms and sweep her up in them, but the narrator is careful to tell us that on Nora's part this is merely because of the presence of another human, and not because it is specifically male, older and with fatherly pretensions. When he asks her if she could learn to love him we are told, 'Her range of expression of course was limited; she could only answer by another burst of tears' (19).

The next time she screams it is for Roger, and the possibility of losing him to his illness.

> Her heart rose to her throat; she felt a passionate desire to scream. She buried her head in a cushion to stifle the sound; her silent tears fell upon the silk. (119)

It is however ambiguous as to whether Nora actually screams. Her sound is stifled and her tears are silent. By this time she has come back from Rome and she is a lady under Mrs Keith's tutelage, and so silences her own screams and in effect this scene becomes a non-scene, with a non-scream. Her year in Europe has done much to dampen her vocal expression, and the innocence of America has given way to the society and manners of Europe. As a young lady, she must now obey social norms, and not shriek in boisterous play as she did when a girl. These shrieks form a displaced language that has much in common with the hysterical utterances of psychoanalytical patients.

Nora's reversion from shriek to silence takes its form in a peculiar tale told to Roger in a letter, written to him from Rome. She tells Roger she has befriended a tourist guide called Mademoiselle Stamm, whose sister was abandoned by her suitor, and wandered for many days until she got to Rome, and sought sanctuary in a Convent.[7]

> With the dreadful name of Sepolte Vive. Here, ever since, she has been immured. The inmates are literally buried alive; they are dead to the outer world. My poor Mademoiselle Stamm followed her and took up her dwelling here, to be near her. But

[7] In July 1860, the Jameses took a family trip to Bonn, Germany and Henry Jr stayed with Dr. Humpert. Humpert's sister was called Fräulein Stamm and she astounded the young Henry with her 'middle class' ignorance of his country. He already viewed Fräulein Stamm as a character for she reminded him of Hepzibah Pyncheon in *The House of the Seven Gables.* (See Edel, 1953, p. 156)

> they have a dead stone wall between them. For twelve years she has never seen her. Her only communication with Lisa – her conventual name she doesn't even know – is once a week to deposit a bouquet of flowers, with her name attached, in the little blind wicket of the convent wall…we see it gobbled up into the speechless maw of the cloister. It is a dismal amusement, but I confess it interests me. I feel as if I knew this poor Lisa; though, after all, she may be dead and we may be worshipping a shadow. But in this city of shadows and memories, what is one shadow more? (102)

What can James mean by this aside? The parallels of the 'speechless maw' of the buried woman, with Nora's silenced screams once she returns from Rome are as if Rome is the very place, and this convent specifically, where she learns to silence her own voice. She confesses that she is intrigued by not only the sister's fate, but by the idea of silent women and their shadows. It is as if Nora has now left the shadow of her young American self in Rome, and returned a woman who must restrain her voice. Thus, when Nora says 'what is one shadow more?' she contributes her own former American self to the Sepolte Vive and this shadow is left behind and lurking within its walls with the other silenced women. James seems to find spaces to hoard women into his novels, seen when Adam Verver adds Charlotte to his treasure collection, and Mr Longdon adds Nanda to his own house at Beccles, a place full of memories and portraits of women. These are the places where women become silent.

Nora does interfere with Roger's plans for her development when she is younger. In terms of language he tries to remove all previous accents and phrases from her old life but she keeps hold of them in an effort to protect her identity, her father's memory, and to not give up this 'inner feeling' that contains her inner world.

> She uttered various impolite words with the most guileless accent and glance, and was as yet equally unsuspicious of the grammar and the Catechism. But when once Roger had straightened out her phrase she was careful to preserve its shape; and when he had decimated her vocabulary she made its surviving particles suffice. (24)

Nora is quick to learn and keen to please, but the 'surviving particles' are her own speech from her life before Roger. Yet her attitude towards George Fenton at the end of the novel indicates she has lost that part of her youth that was 'horribly vulgar' (24) and in fact, in this novella, James is open about Roger's triumph.

Despite Roger's dislike for Nora's real father, George tells Nora "Mr Lambert had been more sinned against than sinning" (60). In the quote from ***King Lear***, James makes the link between Shakespeare and his similar concerns with inarticulacy between fathers and daughters in his play obvious. Freud's own essay 'The Theme of the Three Caskets' (1913) takes ***King Lear*** as its main focus and claims that Cordelia's silent love for her father leads to her own demise. Freud links muteness with death, thus reinforcing Edgar's speech, ("Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" Act V, 323) that silence and restraint lend to misunderstandings and sometimes death.

Roger notices that Nora, apart from her shrieks, is very restrained in her expressiveness. He thinks that: 'She kept her temper so carefully: what in the world was she keeping it for?' (48), and when he realises her need to hear about her father he has 'a pitying sense of what her long silence must have cost her' (45). Nora's inner world becomes at once cloaked and apparent in the words James often gives to his girl characters when she says, "I know, Roger; *I* know!" (43) As with Maisie and Nanda, it is never fully clear what they actually 'know', and the readers, as well as the characters, are often left in the dark of submerged possibilities. The most obvious reading would be that James wishes to imply that these females have acquired sexual knowledge; knowledge of the sexual and secret relationships of those people in their lives; or simply a growing perception of their own place in these sexual intrigues.

When Roger meets Miss Sands, a possible back up for Roger should Nora reject him, Roger jokes that he has saved Nora from her muteness and encouraged her to speak.

> "In other words you are engaged to marry her."
> "Not a bit of it."
> "Why, then, she is a deaf-mute whom you have rendered vocal, or a pretty heathen whom you have brought to Sunday school."
> "Roger laughed exuberantly. "You have hit it," he said; "a deaf-mute whom I have taught to speak. Add to that she was a little blind, and that now she recognises me with spectacles, and you will admit that I have reason to be proud of my work." (99)

Nora does in fact learn to see clearly, when she sees that Roger is the 'only man in it [her life] who had a heart' (196). Boren says 'Roger's incestuous bond with Nora carries over into their conversations or dialogues which, like so many dialogues in James, resemble analytic sessions' (30). She goes on to say that through this, Nora 'has been forced into a type of regression' (32); however Roger is partly right. He has taught Nora to use language and Nora's speech improves whilst Roger's falters. Roger cannot stop her from asking about her father, he cannot stop her from questioning their own relationship, and he finds he loves her more for her outbursts: 'She spoke with a proud decision, which was very becoming; she had never yet come so near being beautiful. In the midst of his passionate vexation, Roger admired her' (69).

She believes, through Mrs Keith's tutelage that she has learnt to like her voice: 'I speak up at people as bold as brass […] I like talking' (103). However, the type of language Mrs Keith imposes upon Nora is one of manners and self-restraint, thus when Nora screams it is into the cushion. While Mrs Keith has given her opportunities to speak and play a vocal part in society, she has also taught her to confine her speech within the rules of a European society that Nora must follow. She has been taught not to show emotion, and she is silent in front of George, in an example of a 'Jamesian' non-scene, when she should have liked to laugh:

> Nora wished in after years she had been able to laugh at this disclosure; to pretend, at least, to an exhilaration she so little felt. But she remained almost sternly silent, with her eyes on her plate, stirring her tea. (185)

With Roger, she is able to talk and express herself, while the effect of Mrs Keith seems to suppress this in her. The Sepolte Vive is a place where Nora leaves behind the freedom of American innocence and becomes accustomed to the European form of speech that consists of the dangerous talk so prevalent in Mrs Brookenham's drawing room. At the same time, her trip to Europe teaches her the value of repressed speech. This ambiguity complicates the evidence found within the text. James's ideas about the relationship between American and European modes of speech would become more distinct in his later works.

Nora's evolution throughout the novella also allows her to see, as she sees through Hubert: '"Are you, at heart, a clergyman? I have been wondering"' (121). At the end of the story, Roger's perception that he has taught Nora to talk, and shown her how to see comes true, for she runs from Hubert's house to find Roger on the street.

> Nora read silently in his haggard eyes the whole record of his suffering. It is a strange truth that this seemed the most beautiful thing she had ever looked upon; the sight of it was delicious. It seemed to whisper louder and louder that secret about Roger's heart. (196)

At the end of the novella, Nora uses varied forms of communication with Roger. The continual form of communication, from the way she silently reads his suffering and how this whispers to her, reinforces her choice of Roger. Of the ending Boren has said: 'The marriage that is implied at the ending of *Watch and Ward* would seem to symbolise the union of two incomplete personalities: Roger's inarticulate creativity mated to Nora's beautiful but powerless voice' (37). However, Roger's creativity, in conceiving of his master plan to 'raise' a wife for himself has succeeded, for not only did he manage to make Nora love him, but he also managed to love Nora. As the novel progresses his character

weakens, verbally and physically, while Nora's flourishes. Her voice does indeed become powerless under the watchful eye of Mrs Keith, but with Roger, she has found a safe haven for its liberation. With Roger, she can talk, and in a sentimental ending to the story together the incomplete personalities, and the lock and key imagery that pervades the text, can finally fit.

However, despite the damaging effects of Mrs Keith, without her as part of the triangle Roger and Nora would not have maintained this relationship, as Mrs Keith would forever remind Nora, in the last lines of the novella, "The fact is, Nora is under a very peculiar obligation to me!" (197). James would use this model for his future work. The influence the mother figure would have on the repression of the daughter's voice develops in his future novels and she becomes almost monstrous in her attempts to hurt the daughter.

The Story of *Watch and Ward*.

Both Habegger and Kaplan have seen James's treatment of *Watch and Ward* as one of neglect. R.W.B. Lewis even says James disavowed his first novel, and that it was only published in book form 'for copyright reasons' (239). In 1878, far from forgetting *Watch and Ward*, James extensively edited and revised the novel for republication. Some of his revisions changed the tone and meaning of some of the characterisations in the novel. Jessica Levine describes 'the silencing influence' (xii) of William Dean Howells, James's editor. Rather than seeing Howell's early revisions as a repressing force within the text, Levine sees it as an authorial choice to be led by Howells: 'The choice not to offend an audience, to protect oneself from criticism, to consolidate a position in the literary mainstream, and to identify with aesthetic traditions marked by restraint instead of display'

(xiii). This appears to be true to an extent, as James was later to become influenced by his brother William's opinion, as Leon Edel points out:

> Nevertheless the time was to come – it must be recorded – when both William James and that scrupulous guardian of adolescent reading-matter, William Dean Howells, signalled Henry James that he might be a little more cautious and not quite so sexual in certain of his images. (*Watch and Ward*, 7)

It was still early in his writing career, and while James may be complicit in his own silencing, the older William, and the experienced Howells may have influenced him.

The first text holds more clues to the meanings James wanted to bring to his first novel. This self-censorship is in accordance with the editing and revisions he made to Minny Temple's letters, and his sister Alice's *Diary*. The 'conspiracy of silence' is not limited to the realms of psychoanalysis.[8] The parallels between the silences, omissions and false information by the psychoanalytic circles of Ferenczi and Breuer or the analysts themselves, are found also in their critics, as we shall see from critical discourse in the cases of both Elma and Bertha. In fiction, this is played out using the daughter figure. The shadowy omnipotent author, while attempting to create a character who can use silence as a weapon and speak out in turns against the position she has been placed in by both analyst/author and increasingly we find by the mother, must also cover his tracks well to avoid a deeper penetration by the reader into his own 'secret world'. To explain further, James's revisions are so extensive as to alter many meanings and readings of this text, one reading being that of autobiography.

Kaplan says:

> The short novel is slight in form but its subject matter is substantial and autobiographically revealing. In fact, his mother might have felt some unwarranted

[8] Discussed in more detail in the 'Elma Pálos' chapter. Harold P Blum's essay 'The Confusion of Tongues and Psychic Trauma' in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 75: 871-882, (1994), discusses this 'conspiracy' of Ferenczi's suppressed works, by Ernest Jones and others.

> optimism in regard to her hope that Henry would marry since the main character of *Watch and Ward*, Roger Lawrence is obsessed with marrying. (128)

Kaplan, when describing Roger, mistakes his age to be twenty-six.[9] Both editions of the text state that Roger is twenty-nine, but James would have been twenty-six when he first started writing the novel, showing Kaplan to be viewing the text in light of James's autobiographical details a little too closely. At the opposite end of the critical canon, Susan Kappeler has much to say on the 'autobiographic fallacy': 'It appears that despite its intrinsic naiveté, the temptation to take the narrative 'I' as James's personal pronoun is irresistible to most critics' (200). It is possible that the autobiographical components, if they exist, are to be found not in the plot, or in the narrative 'I', but in the revisions. In this case, we can tell more about James through his revisions than the original.

In the first edition, Roger is described as 'rather enhanced by a precocious partial baldness', which was revised to 'a too early baldness' (3).[10] James mainly applies this word, 'precocious' to young girls. In a review of *Our Mutual Friend*, he wrote of Miss Jenny Wren that 'she belongs to the troupe of precocious children'.[11] In his review of Louisa May Alcott's *Moods* he writes 'we are utterly weary of stories about precocious little girls.'[12] Nora is precocious we are told. Roger calls her 'the little, forlorn, precocious, potential woman' (13) and she also 'seemed by instinct to have perceived the fitness of not speaking of her own affairs, and indeed displayed in the matter a precocious good taste' (24). To respond to the 'precocious little girls' James is so weary of he creates an equally precocious girl, and allows her to grow up. The connotations of the word together with the

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[9] It is also the case that R.W.B Lewis in *The Jameses* (p. 39) mistakes Roger Lawrence for Roger Lambert, Lambert being Nora's last name. These factual mistakes provide corrupted readings for further study.
[10] A full version of the 1871 text with revisions and deletions can be found at http://www2.newpaltz.edu/~hathawar/WatchandWardVariorum.pdf
[11] 'The Nation' 21st December 1865.
[12] 'North American 101' July 1865. In Sarah Elbert (1991) p. 219

sexualised language and scenes in the novella render Nora into a 'pre-Lolita' type figure; therefore Roger, who is safe and metaphorically impotent, cannot share in this precocity and so James had to revise this description of his 'precocious' baldness.

Another revision turns Roger into a more innocent figure. The early edition says there was 'something grotesque in his new condition, in the sudden assumption of paternal care by a man who had seemed to the world to rejoice so placidly in his sleek and comfortable singleness.' This changes to Roger being 'something comical in a sleek young bachelor turning nurse and governess' (*Watch and Ward*, 20). This alteration sees Roger's new role shift from something paternal and masculine to something lighter, feminine in these typical female roles and therefore harmless. Through his revisions, James desexualises Roger. In the first edition Roger 'passionately kissed' the senorita whom he fell in love with during his travels abroad, but in the revision he only 'tenderly kissed' her (38). Most of the eroticised language is taken out of the novel, for example, what had been a 'seductive invitation', is now an 'attractive invitation' (134).

It is these revisions by James that have turned Roger from a possible menacing, seductive older man, similar to Hubert, into a passive, stout and almost comic figure. Either James was pressured to remove from his father figure all language that would denote a sexual predator, or he decided to change his view of the father figure and make him a safe haven for Nora.

The descriptions of Nora have changed her character: James's initial depictions of Nora are of a sly and confident young girl; in the later version, she becomes more mysterious and introverted. While this new revised Nora is quiet and seemingly inward thinking, at the same time, James takes out any references to Nora's inner thoughts and consciousness,

leaving a much blander character who has had her inner private life taken from her by the writer.

The description of Nora starts with a comment on her forehead being 'high and boldly rounded', which changes to simply 'was symmetrical' (15). She becomes something balanced and regular, not too bold or audacious. Her 'subtle grace' changes to 'elusive grace' (33), thus she becomes something mysterious and deceptive. However this phrase in itself is deceptive for Nora has also been described as a 'fright' (23), by female friends of Roger, and Hubert exclaims "*Elle a les pieds énormes*" (31) when Roger makes her wear big shoes to his regret. Thus, some of the descriptions of Nora lend her a comical air, much like with Roger, and it could be that it is the grace that is elusive, and sometimes lacking in Nora, rather than that she possesses the 'elusive grace'. Her character between James's writing his first edition and revising his second has become fragmented. She has become a character with neither mystery or grace, nor is she comically touched, thus does she become indefinite and vague.

However, despite James's chopping away at her character with his revisions, there are sentences portraying Nora's character that cannot change the meaning. In fact, James's attempts to mask his first Nora's bold personality do not always work. The phrase 'the growing womanly cunning of her little nameless services and caresses', changes to 'the delicacy of her nameless services' (42), which takes away a sense of Nora as a 'Lolita' model where her 'services' are rendered for her own reasons, and they simply become 'delicate', and therefore have a fragile femininity about them. In either case, the 'nameless services' remain.

James also uses Hubert to view Nora in an uncertain light. When Nora is permitted to see Roger after his convalescence Hubert watches her reactions to Roger. In the original

version ‘She flung back her shawl with vehemence, as if to release her hands; he was unable to see where she placed them’. This changes to ‘She flung back her shawl with vehemence, as if to release her arms; she was throwing them around her friend’ (137). The original version of this provokes an uncertainty as to Nora’s actions, and reminds us of one of Hubert’s earlier thoughts of Nora: ‘he too wondered whether she was not a bit of a coquette’ (133). Why was it originally so important for the reader to know that Hubert could not see where Nora put her hands, and, where did she put them? It is likely that she simply clasped Roger’s hand, but James made this originally ambiguous and makes the reader, as well as Hubert, question her actions and her character.

The relationship between Roger and Nora has always been ambiguous to the reader, but now the characters also start to wonder what kind of relationship they have. The doctor attending Roger later tells Hubert “The young lady knows a few remedies not taught in schools” (137), increasing Hubert’s worries about Nora’s character. It is strange how James would leave this sexually ambiguous innuendo in the revised version but edit out others. These changes give Nora’s character an inconsistent portrayal, which is neither that of a ‘coquette’, nor an innocent.

Nora’s character has essentially become fragmented for she has changed from being solid and definite to a character full of ambiguities and of a questionable nature. This fragmentation can be seen everywhere through the story’s revisions. When Roger takes the young Nora off to live with him, James describes the new memories she creates in this home as ‘compensation for her own obliterated past’ (21). This changed from Nora having a ‘dissevered past’: as if cutting her past into two was not enough, James had to brutally ‘obliterate’ it. Added to this is Roger’s treatment of her speech. The original text states: ‘But when Roger had straightened out her phrase she was careful to preserve its shape; and

when he had solemnly proscribed these all too innocent words, they seldom reappeared' and changed this to 'when he had decimated her vocabulary; she made its surviving particles suffice' (24). Her language becomes made up of particles that once were whole, and James has chosen to change this sentence in the revised edition to add to the effect of Roger 'decimating' Nora's personality. Whether Roger intentionally represents James or not, the parallels between Roger's re-forming of Nora, and James's re-writing of Minny's letters, are remarkably similar.

James also takes out Nora's deeper consciousness. When Nora returns from Rome, Hubert finds her more attractive and yet sees a change in her. She is not the sweet and innocent girl she once was, and Hubert notices this. In a scene where Nora wishes to dismiss Hubert for the evening, he says '"You will at least shake hands," he said reproachfully' (132). The original version contained the sentence: 'A deeper consciousness had somehow been opened in her common consciousness,' and James deleted this. He no longer allows Nora to have a deeper inner world of thought, as he also deletes her thoughts when writing a letter to Hubert from Rome. In it she writes of her love of visiting churches; deleted in the later version is the sentence 'I like to linger in them, a barbarous Western maid, doubly heretic, an alien social and religious, and watch the people come and go in this eternal business of salvation, take their ease between the fancy walls of the faith'. When she writes to Hubert in the original version she writes of watching, but even this action is taken out in the 1878 edition. In this revised edition, to Roger she writes of speaking of the loss of the voice of the silent nuns, and Mademoiselle Stamm, whose very name conjures up problematic communication with a stammer. In the original version, Nora's use of communication include writing a letter, the flowers left outside the Sepolte Vive in communication to the nuns within, and her everyday 'chatter', which flourishes in Rome.

Writing to Roger in the 1878 edition she is able to tell him that abroad, she can speak, watch, and listen, but to Hubert, she does none of these things.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the novel is left hanging, with no optimistic hope for Nora's happiness, just a strange affirmation from Mrs. Keith about the debt Nora owes her:

> Mrs. Keith and Mrs. Lawrence are very good friends. On being complimented on possessing the confidence of so charming a woman as Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Keith has been know to say, opening and shutting her fan, "The fact is, Nora is under a very peculiar obligation to me!" (197)

This 'peculiar obligation' is of course Mrs. Keith's refusal of Roger, which therefore sets the course of events in motion. Mrs. Keith has been the mother figure to Nora and so this ending is peculiar in itself, for surely the focus of the novella has been on the relationship between Roger and Nora. For it to end with the statement that the two women are 'good friends', followed by the acknowledgement of the debt one woman owes another is surely a diminution of that friendship if Mrs Keith perpetually reminds people of it.

James stresses the impact Mrs. Keith has and probably will have on the life of Nora, and it may not be a good one. In later novels such as *The Awkward Age*, the mother figure proves to be a dangerous and destroying figure, much like the mothers in the case studies of Bertha and Elma.

James has made a point of ending the novella with Mrs. Keith in the revised edition, for the original has a deleted paragraph, which focuses attention on Hubert and his marriage.

> Another of Mrs. Keith's sayings may perhaps appositely retail, her answer, one evening to an inquiry as to Roger's age: "Twenty-five-seconde jeunesse." Hubert Lawrence, on the other hand, has already begun to pass for an elderly man. Mrs. Hubert, however,

> preserves the balance. She is wonderfully fresh, and with time, has grown stout, like her mother, though she has nothing of the jaded look of that excellent lady.[13]

This physical blending of the daughter and the mother is symptomatic of the triangle that now exists between Hubert and his wife and her mother. Her mother is part of Hubert's and his wife's marriage. Roger's passing comments throughout the story on Hubert and his 'young girls' (197) are reinforced here, with this young girl being the supposed downfall of Hubert as he is shown to physically decline. However this ending has been deleted and so instead of James's original idea to end the novella with this worrying triangle, we now conclude with the even more confusing relationship between the two women, Nora and Mrs. Keith.

James's revisions have portrayed Nora as a young girl, who eventually finds some sort of comfort in Roger, but it is an uneasy comfort, and through the revisions, she has lost much of her wholeness and much of her voice. On paper, in her writing, she expresses her love for talk; and James certainly views Europe as a place where American girls can thrive. However, eventually they must return to America and to that sanctuary of the father figure, who protects them from a damaging mother figure or in this case a mother figure who, for a few short months, gave Nora the freedom to talk in a constricting and dangerous European society. In Europe with Mrs Keith, Nora has learnt to express herself while at the same time conforming to the rules of society, thus her development is stunted and can only continue once in America again.

Perhaps this 'peculiar obligation' is not that Mrs Keith gave up Roger, but that she allowed Nora to flourish in Europe. It is this freedom to talk that is so distressing to Roger and Hubert, and is further explored by James in the drawing room of Mrs. Brookenham in

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[13] http://www2.newpaltz.edu/~hathawar/WatchandWardVariorum.pdf

The Awkward Age. James himself in this early novel recognised this freedom of speech that takes place in Europe, which, while allowing the young girl to express herself clearly, can also place her in danger of disclosure and therefore ruin.

Before Nora leaves for Europe, in the first edition, Hubert makes her promise not to 'lose this blessed bondage of American innocence'. In the later edition, this becomes a 'blessed bandage' (90) and while this could be a typing error, James could have decided to change the whole meaning. What initially held Nora captive, James changed to a place of sanctuary, something that heals and protects from further disease.

Chapter 3 *Washington Square*

The Spinster's Revenge

Written ten years after *Watch and Ward*, *Washington Square* replicates the formula of the triangular relationship. The triangle that has had the most critical attention is the father/daughter/lover triangle and most critics such as Mary Doyle Springer and Millicent Bell put Mrs Penniman on the pile of comical, placid old maid figures. Bell says she is: 'All air and arts, none of them very high in quality; her speech and her behaviour constantly blossom forth in dusty paper blooms of rhetoric, second hand and second rate histrionic gestures' (66). However, I see Mrs Penniman as a dangerous matriarch, and see the triangle as father/daughter/mother one. Her flowery language hides a formidable character who in essence is the cause of Catherine's misery.

As the engineer of the doomed romance between Catherine and Morris, she disrupts the quiet and contented relationship Catherine has with her father, and on closer inspection, it is doubtful whether Catherine places much importance on Morris's role in her life. The romance exists only in Mrs Penniman's mind and in Morris's monetary dreams, for Catherine's pleasure and pain derive from her relationship with her father, and not with Morris. Beneath the romantic plot, James's development of the triadic relationship draws attention to the actions of Mrs. Penniman and her effect on the daughter's speech.

Washington Square is one of James's early novels but already it is a critical engagement with contemporary psychological discourse. We can see his shifting identification between both the all-knowing male analyst, as typified in Sloper, and the patient. He questions the analyst's ability to narrate accurately the story of his patient by using a narrator who is ultimately unable to tell Catherine's own story. These three (James, the narrator and Sloper)

are all versions of the father/analyst whom Catherine frustrates and eventually resists. Through the narrator's hesitant commentary, we can see that Catherine gradually becomes aware of her growing consciousness of and the danger Mrs. Penniman presents.

James develops his mother figure from a woman who threatens the daughter's development, as in *Watch and Ward*, to one who becomes plotting and devious, damaging Catherine's ability to speak, and harming her mental health. James creates a destructive domestic scene that causes acute unrest and nervous and aphrasic symptoms in the daughter. Examining a daughter who suffers from repressed speech is a model he is beginning to develop in this novel.

Mrs Penniman, who sees herself as a duenna in a romantic play, is manipulating the relationship between Catherine and Morris. The only problem with this fairy tale scenario is that Catherine does not realise that she is part of a gothic romance and refuses to play her part. James includes the tyrannical father, the evil and dangerous witch, and the charming prince. All that is missing is the heroine. The parallels with such tales take their precedent from dark stories such as 'The Little Mermaid', Hans Christian Andersen's most 'Grimm' and tragic story.[1] This fairy tale invocation relies on the premise of the gothic genre that W*ashington Square* acts out. It is a novel that is concerned with the 'unspeakable' and this concern is repressed within the text itself, beneath the surface of the social realism.

On reviewing Ruth and Augustus Goetz's stage adaptation of *Washington Square* (re-titled *The Heiress: A Dramatisation*) in 1948, Mary McCarthy wrote that 'Mr and Mrs Goetz wish her [Catherine] to be a thumping Freudian case-history, a repressed libidinal

[1] *The Little Mermaid* was first published in 1837 and features most of the above components. The similarity with *Washington Square* and in fact all stories discussed in this thesis stems from the dangerous figure of the 'mother'; for the mermaid's tongue and therefore speech is taken by the sea witch who gives her a potion that will give her human legs so she can be with the Prince. The feeling of walking on a thousand knives and having a sword passed through her once she has taken this potion only adds to the sense of the mother figure as a danger to the daughter.

impulse which, thwarted, destroys itself.' She goes on to comment that the 'cruel father, abused daughter, deceitful lover, Victorian setting, crashing psychological finale […] calls for a subtitle, The Spinster's Revenge' (Shelston, 44). In her depiction of this triad, McCarthy (and therefore the directors) ignores the role Mrs Penniman plays in the plot. The 'spinster's revenge' that McCarthy attributes to the play refers to Catherine's refusal of Morris. But I see Mrs Penniman as the spinster (despite being a widow), playing an evil game with her niece to provide retribution to her brother who patronises her with his unrelenting ironic tone and who makes it clear she is at his financial mercy.

The house in Washington Square is a bold attempt to portray the fear that violence can happen within the domestic sphere. The repression and mental 'sickness' that emerge in Catherine are shown here within the close confines of the father/daughter/mother triangle, which often lead to bursts of violent feeling from Catherine. Sloper plays the dark and cold patriarch, and is peeved when Catherine shows restraint and does not act like a hysteric lovelorn woman. In fact, she is quite the opposite, and her tendency for silence and extreme self-repression epitomize the damage done to the psyche within this northeastern corridor of America.

Psychology and the Anticipation of the 'New Woman'

William Veeder considers that 'compared to *The Golden Bowl* or even *The Portrait*, psychological exploration is not extensive in *Washington Square*' (196). Actually this novel appears at the same time to be much more obvious and yet subtle in its tentative exploration of the treating of psychological problems in women. With the description of Sloper as a 'ladies' doctor', and therefore a doctor who would talk with hysterical women in an analytical setting, there is the problem of the timeline. *Washington Square* is set in the

'first half of the present century […] during the latter part of it' (1), and therefore the 'new woman' had yet to emerge, but writing in 1880, James traces the history of the new woman. Set in the 1840s, James's novel avoids any comparison to the works of the European psychoanalysts who were tentatively forming their own accounts of the female mind in the early 1880s. This setting allows James to delve into the early psychology of hysteria with the hindsight of the newly discovered neurasthenia, which in the 1840s had yet to be named. James's preoccupation with the female mind and how it can be expressed in literary form presents a problem in the pre-Civil War setting of this novel. While his later novels deal with the unsaid, with repression, with bursts of hysteria and muted screams, here he shows a heroine who is so unlike the later heroines that she neither fits the Victorian angel role, nor is at the stage of the 'new woman'. The novel presents James's conflicted attempts to engage with the 'new woman' who is a figure he is not yet sure how to deal with, and has yet to work out her place in his novels.

In 1877, The Adams Nervine Asylum in Massachusetts was founded and in 1883, Robert Edes was the consulting physician. Alice James visited this asylum and underwent treatment. The asylum was among the first to treat and study neurasthenia. In ***Washington Square***, James's interest and insight into Alice's ailments are explored through the plight of an unhappy and over-parented daughter in the character of Catherine. The same non-scenes and paralyzed rage that Alice would write about are prefigured and noted by James here, showing Catherine's rigid control over her own emotions.

In 1895, Robert Edes addressed the Boston Medical Society with his studies on 'The New England Invalid'. He said that 'the modern habit of manners of repression, of keeping the feelings concealed, a habit which increases with civilisation and fashion, with higher social position' was to blame for the rise in the 'American-disease'. He asked: 'would it not be

better if our customs and "good form" permitted a patient to scream, as she so often says she wants to, instead of restraining her feelings for propriety's sake, and developing a neuralgia or paralysis or an attack of "nervous prostration?"' (Graham, 164)

Neurasthenia, the urban disease, called 'Americanitis' as popularized by James's brother William, would have certainly been of interest to Henry, especially with its propensity to be designated a woman's problem.[2] The idea that this view of female rebellion is seen to be a form of mental illness can be compared with interpretation of the hysterical utterings in the psychoanalytic case studies of female patients. It is clear that James's suggestive and speculative attempts at discerning the relationship between a patient and her doctor in this novel marks the beginning of the psychological novels James was later to write.

The 'Third Element'

Mary Doyle Springer sees Mrs Penniman as an 'extra' (77):

> Aunt Penniman is more active within her narrow scope, and a cheerful exploiter, because she lacks Catherine's sensitivity and understanding, but especially because this kind of life gives her absolutely nothing else to do with her time […] There is something comical, but by its very comicality hideous and oppressive, in her constant presence in the story. (81-2)

This view is an underestimation of Mrs Penniman's character. Millicent Bell is nearer the mark when she suggests that Mrs Penniman is a 'theatrical director' (72) and I want to explore in more detail her often overlooked actions. Her encouragement of Morris becomes

[2] George Miller Beard first published his essay 'Neurasthenia or Nervous Exhaustion' in 1869. Both Henry and William suffered from varying degrees of neurasthenic symptoms during their lives. Typically associated with the upper classes that have little or no employment, by the end of the century it was used as a diagnosis for the lower classes living in poverty and squalor and particularly immigrants to the cities. It was a popular diagnosis for many ills at the end of the century, and was associated with the Weir Mitchell treatment method. Today the term Neurasthenia is not used as a diagnosis in the American Psychiatric Associations *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.

Catherine's misery and she poses a great danger to Catherine's stability and future. Her ideas of gothic melodrama and midnight secret weddings blend with the American realism of the story. The gothic element of terror and violence within the domestic space become a reality assembled by a meddlesome aunt. Bell even goes so far as to call her 'that odious image of the man-less woman as perverted meddler' (79), but even 'meddler' suggests a simple 'busybody' approach to her actions. Mrs Penniman's motives are far more self-serving than that. She is described by the narrator as 'strange and formidable' and has 'an oppressive air' (15). In the original published version of this novel, George Du Maurier, a close friend of James, illustrated the book. His portrayal of Mrs Penniman in his artwork shows a vulgarly coquettish woman who clearly desires Morris for herself.

HE HAD A SWEET, LIGHT, TENOR VOICE.

Mrs Penniman is the 'third element' that comes between Sloper and Catherine, and Sloper fails to see this. He tells his sister Mrs Almond:

> 'It is the point where the adoration stops that I find it interesting to fix.'
> 'It stops where the other sentiment begins.'
> 'Not at all; that would be simple enough. The two things are extremely mixed up, and the mixture is extremely odd. It will produce some third element, and that's what I'm waiting to see. I wait with suspense – with positive excitement.' (112)

Mrs Penniman makes up the 'third element' in the triad, not Morris. Morris is the shadow that haunts this triad and James alludes to Morris's spectre-like qualities: 'this brilliant stranger – this sudden apparition' (28). He is spectral to Catherine and kept out of the threesome. While Sloper ignores his existence, Mrs. Penniman manipulates Morris, giving bad advice followed by contradictory and foolish notions to keep him engaged in the affair, which never has any chance of succeeding. Catherine in fact sees Morris far less than Mrs Penniman sees him. She contacts him less and sees him as hovering on the boundaries of her closed relationship with her father.

The narrator makes it plain at the beginning, that Lavinia was 'one of the most striking features of her [Catherine's] immediate ***entourage***' (5). She is 'romantic' and 'sentimental' (7) but equally, her speeches have the ring of darkness around them. She sees her role of Catherine's companion as cover for her own plots as she tells her brother: "Are you afraid she will be insipid? My dear brother, it is I who supply the butter; so you needn't fear!" (7)

It becomes obvious from the beginning that Morris and Mrs. Penniman plot together. At the engagement party, Morris spends a lot of time with the aunt, and at his first visit to Washington Square he spends the whole meeting discussing Catherine with Mrs. Penniman, much to the widow's delight. When he leaves, Catherine notes 'he was going, without having said anything to her; but even on these terms she was glad to have seen him' (27).

Mrs Penniman manipulates the situation so that both father and daughter are cut off from Morris. She keeps her visits to Morris secret and had 'become as uncommunicative as Catherine herself. She was tasting of the sweets of concealment; she had taken up the line of mystery' (42). All three act under the guise that all is normal, and that Morris does not exist. They do not let the 'Morris affair' affect or penetrate their triad. Catherine tells Morris: 'I shall never mention you' (39). In a letter to William, James says 'The young man in *Washington Square* is not a portrait – he is sketched from the outside merely and not *fouillé*. ['gone into'] The only good thing in the story is the girl' (Edel, 1975, 316). Thus, James makes it clear that the 'lover' is secondary to the plot.

Of course, it becomes clear that Mrs Penniman does not care for her niece when she tells Morris to break off the engagement. When Catherine emerges after a night of silent sobbing with Mrs Penniman, her aunt is perturbed by her healthy appearance thinking Catherine should pine to a silent death in her room: 'Mrs Penniman was in despair; and she noted, with extreme annoyance, that the trace of the night's tears had completely vanished from Catherine's eyes. She had a most impractical physique' (104).

When the chance of a marriage seems likely, and Catherine consents, Mrs Penniman immediately produces more drama and misery by persuading Morris to break off the engagement, proving she has known of Morris's mercenary motives from the start. "You may postpone – you may change about; she won't think the worse of you" (116). This is followed by a remark from the narrator that she was walked back to her 'domicile of which her tenure had become insecure' (116). With Catherine out of the paternal house, there will be no need for Mrs Penniman. Her actions, which cause Catherine misery, seem based on an attempt to secure her own stability in Sloper's household, and a form of revenge. She is

reliant on a patronising brother and so incites terrible disruption to the previously calm household.

Mrs Penniman inflames Catherine's anger further when she quotes Shakespeare ("The grief that does not speak," 166) in an attempt to extract information from her. She tells her that it is 'practical' and 'reasonable' that the affair should be broken off, but Catherine has been nothing if not reasonable and practical throughout this time, and so we are told by the narrator that Catherine's answers and inquiries to Mrs Penniman are violent: 'This suggestiveness was not lost upon Catherine, who repeated her violent inquiry' (166). Catherine realises that Mrs Penniman is a sinister figure who has brought the whole affair into the house only to ruin their lives in the process. Catherine has always known the effects of words, which she reveals when she says to her aunt: '"Yes; and that was the way you worried him; you made him tired of my very name! I wish you had never spoken of me to him; I never asked your help!"' (169) While Mrs Penniman's language is florid it is also scheming and causes misery; Sloper on the other hand appears to know how to talk and he hides behind his own irony. It is Catherine who abstains from talking, the only one who has experienced its damaging effects.

To Catherine's dismay, Mrs Penniman lets it be known Morris has made free with Sloper's study chair:

> 'He used to sit in your father's study,' said Mrs Penniman, with a little laugh.
>
> Catherine was silent a moment. The idea was disagreeable to her, and she was reminded again, with pain, of her aunt's secretive habits. Morris, the reader may be informed, had had the tact not to tell her that he sat in her father's study. He had known her but for a few months, and her aunt had known her for fifteen years; and yet he would not have made the mistake of thinking that Catherine would see the joke of the thing. "I am sorry you made him go into father's room," she said, after a while. (134)

To Catherine, her father's authority in his home is equal to Catherine's respect and admiration for him, and any interruption or prospective coup is regarded with mistrust.

Catherine sees the incident as a manoeuvre by Mrs Penniman to disrupt the power relations within the household and expresses her disquiet at the attempt. Knowing the temperament of her brother, Mrs Penniman is aware that Morris would not get the inheritance and uses him at various stages to disrupt the household power structure as a proxy irritation of her brother. We are told of her penchant for whimsy and drama but she is a lady who has been reliant on a condescending brother for most of her later years, and it is because she has known Catherine for so long, that she attempts to provoke Catherine and break her silent and still facade.[3] Catherine becomes a victim caught in a vindictive plan to exact reprisals on Sloper for years of patriarchal irony pointed at Mrs Penniman.

Mrs Penniman finally turns the situation around and inadvertently protects Catherine's privacy by battling against his sarcasm by using her own methods of punishment.

> 'And I had a sort of foolish hope that you would come home without that odious ironical tone with which you treat the most sacred subjects.'
> 'Don't undervalue irony; it is often of great use. It is not, however, always necessary, and I will show you how gracefully I can lay it aside. I should like to know whether you think Morris Townsend will hang on?'
> 'I will answer you with your own weapons,' said Mrs Penniman. 'You had better wait and see.' (144)

And so starts a period of punishment for Sloper, not only from Catherine who has challenged his irony with silence all along, but now from Mrs Penniman and other women whom the doctor has previously relied upon for information. When Morris abandons Catherine, all the women in Sloper's life completely close down and refuse to converse with him. They literally punish him for his cruelty with silence and feigned ignorance:

> He was certainly curious about it, and would have given a good deal to discover the exact truth; but it was his punishment that he never knew – his punishment, I mean, for the abuse of sarcasm in his relations with his daughter. There was a good deal of effective sarcasm in her keeping him in the dark, and the rest of the world conspired

[3] The narrator says that Mrs Penniman has known Catherine for fifteen years. Given that Catherine is twenty-one, this mystery of the lost six years can possibly mean Mrs Penniman herself eloped with Mr Penniman.

> with her, in this sense, to be sarcastic. Mrs Penniman told him nothing, partly because he never questioned her – he made light of Mrs Penniman for that – and partly because she flattered herself that a tormenting reserve, and a serene profession of ignorance, would avenge her for his theory that she had meddled in the matter. He went two or three times to Mrs Montgomery, but Mrs Montgomery had nothing to impart […] Mrs Almond […] could give the Doctor no satisfaction. (176)

The ladies whom Sloper has previously been able to extract information from have shut down and refuse to participate in his analysis.

The Ladies' Doctor and his Patient

The most prominent axis of the triad is Catherine's relationship with her father. Sloper's reputation as a ladies' doctor and his thoughts of edifying and instructing women make it immediately clear that Sloper is a medical doctor with an interest in the psychology of women (or an interest in this profitable branch of medicine) and their 'complications' (6). At the same time, his ignorance of his daughter's condition or mental state suggests that he despises any weakness or flux of feelings in people especially his daughter. The narrator comments:

> His private opinion of the more complicated sex was not exalted. He regarded its complications as more curious than edifying, and he had an idea of the beauty of ***reason***, which was, on the whole, meagrely gratified by what he observed in his female patients. (6)

The narrator has already criticised Sloper's lack of ability to keep half his family alive considering his profession, and so now, we have a picture of a doctor who also cannot diagnose his daughter's condition. His suggestion to Mrs Penniman that 'she should make an asylum of his house' (5) tell us that he views his house as a sanctuary and place of retirement for women who should be kept from the world.

When it comes to her father, Catherine's ideas resemble those of a lover. We are told that

> She thought him the cleverest and handsomest and most celebrated of men. The poor girl found her account so completely in the exercise of her affections that the little tremor of fear mixed itself with her filial passion gave the thing an extra relish rather than blunted its edge. (9)

In traditional Freudian terms these initial feelings for her father are natural and Catherine, we are told, is completely 'natural' (31). The pleasure and pain she experiences from her father are mixed, and her enjoyment in being his daughter is heightened for these reasons. The equilibrium between Catherine and her father is broken when Mrs Penniman brings in Morris.

> He left her resignedly; he had got what he wanted. Fortunately he was ignorant that half an hour later, going home with her father, and feeling him near, the poor girl, in spite of her sudden declaration of courage, began to tremble again. Her father said nothing; but she had an idea his eyes were fixed upon her in the darkness. (52)

Sloper's glowing eyes that Catherine thinks she can see even in darkness have a 'Svengalian' quality and Catherine feels his oppressive and watchful gaze intensely.[4] Interestingly, it is Mrs Penniman who remarks on the 'perversity' of Catherine's choice of venue for a romantic liaison, and indeed, it seems to be a part of Catherine's mind-set that she is the good daughter, and if she will disobey her father, it will still be within the confines of his house.

Catherine's relationship with her father resembles the "abnormal" relationship Nora experiences with her real father before his death, and both females take this with them into their adult life. While Catherine's relationship is not sexualised like Nora's, it is verbally abusive and Catherine has become accustomed to living with and accepting this abuse and misconstrues it for love:

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[4] George Du Maurier's novel *Trilby* was written fourteen years after *Washington Square* and featured the hypnotist Svengali. Du Maurier asked James to write *Trilby* but James encouraged Du Maurier to write it himself. There are similarities between *Trilby* and James's later novel, *The Bostonians.*

> It is a literal fact that he almost never addressed her save in the ironical form. Whenever he addressed her he gave her pleasure; but she had to cut her pleasure out of the piece, as it were. (21)

Thus, she fails to see through Morris's motives and words because she has grown up listening to the ironical tone and mistaking it for love. However, Sloper's jealousy and rivalry for his daughter's affections start to consume him.

The only time Sloper can speak freely is outside the confines of Washington Square. When Catherine and Sloper walk among the mountains in the Alps, the imagery is borrowed from such European gothic novels as *Frankenstein*. James places the pair as far away from the confining oppression of Washington Square and its American gothic/realism, and situates them amongst the European gothic and the milieu of Grimm's fairy tales. This passage shows Sloper to be the true worried father. The distance from both the confines of Washington Square society, and Mrs Penniman give Sloper the chance and the motive for behaving like a father who cares for his daughter's welfare. On the way back to the carriage, he stops and waits for her to catch up, and we can see that despite his earlier cruelty he does believe his daughter will be safer with him. Catherine even feels that her father being 'hard' is a virtue in a man. Similar to Nora's ambiguous relationship with her real father, the twisted relationship James's young heroines develop with their fathers is not seen as unusual. She would expect Morris to be hard, and this is why Catherine cannot see through him as Mrs Penniman and her father do.

'The Grief that does not Speak'

As the third part of the triad, Catherine's silence is seen as passivity. Her silence however, is a punctured silence, and it is a symptom of social inadequacy, a punishment, and a rebellion towards her father. It can be seen as a manifestation of trauma inflicted by her

father and aunt. James is faced with the problem of narrative silence and the task of how to fill it. However, beneath the controlled exterior that Catherine presents to her father and aunt, she has surges of violence that she struggles to contain.

Catherine is not the typical 'American Girl' as outlined by Howells in his *A Foregone Conclusion*. In his review of Howell's book, James wrote 'he represents the delicate, nervous, emancipated young women, begotten of our institutions and our climate, and equipped with a lovely face and an irritable moral consciousness'.[5] Catherine is not delicate, but she is nervous and maintains her moral consciousness until the end of the novel. We are told the novel is set roughly forty or fifty years before it was written in 1880, and James portrays a woman who blends aspects of the traditional submissive Victorian daughter with the emerging 'new woman', and he traces the growth and reasons for this change.

William Veeder says that Catherine's 'silence…is sometimes intentional' (189). While Catherine does punish her father with her silence, it is made clear from the outset that Catherine is actually deficient in the art of conversation: 'she mustered learning enough to acquit herself respectably in conversation with her contemporaries – among whom it must be avowed, however, that she occupied a secondary place. It is well known that in New York it is possible for a young girl to occupy a primary one' (9). Catherine is 'quiet and irresponsive' (10), and therefore contained and not the usual hysterical woman Sloper may be accustomed to in his patients. Sloper often tries to provoke an outburst that does not materialise. Catherine responds with silence and even dullness. 'Quiet' is a word constantly used to describe Catherine, and we are told that to make up for her impeded

[5] Henry James, Review of *A Foregone Conclusion*, Nation 20, (7th January 1875) in Michael Anesko *Letters, Fiction, Lives: Henry James and William Dean Howells*. (Oxford University Press US, 1997)

speech ‘she sought to be eloquent in her garments’ (11). Using bright clothes to cover her inability to talk also creates the mystique that she is not who she appears. Even Sloper’s house is the embodiment of Catherine’s personality, with ‘white marble steps ascending to a portal which was also faced with white marble’ adding to the virginal aspect of Catherine’s habitat, and the description of the house as a place of ‘quiet and genteel retirement’ (13). Sloper has raised Catherine in a reclusive state, which forces Catherine to develop her skills of watching and listening.

The neurasthenic and silent tendencies of Catherine can be seen as forms of rebellion. Wendy Graham suggests that:

> Suffragism and neurasthenia are equally potent, though very different, responses to the restrictions that dominant male culture placed on women in the nineteenth century. In either case, the woman refuses to cooperate, physically or emotionally with her husband, father, senator, or president. (164)

Applying this to *Washington Square*, we can see that Catherine’s refusal to speak, provoke, or react to her father’s irony and cruelty may not be just a punishment, but a rebellion against his dominance. However, I also see Catherine’s silence as a response to having suffered through years of verbal abuse from her father and aunt.

Catherine and Sloper replicate the psychoanalytic relationship of doctor and patient. Critics such as Lynda S. Boren have compared the doctor/patient relationship to the father/daughter relationship in James’s novels. This relationship usually focuses on father figures as opposed to actual fathers, but here, not only is Sloper Catherine’s blood father, but he is a doctor. This presentation of the developing analyst/patient relationship in James’s fiction becomes more solid than in *Watch and Ward*. The all-knowing doctor relationship is even recognised by Catherine when she feels the tremors Sloper inspires in her when talking in his study.

> ‘You won’t think me cruel?’ he said, holding her a moment.
>
> This question was not reassuring; it seemed to Catherine, on the contrary, to suggest possibilities which made her feel sick. But she answered coherently enough. ‘No dear father; because if you knew how I feel – and you must know, you know everything – you would be so kind, so gentle.’ (62)

Catherine seems to be aware of the relationship she has with her father and recognizes her role as the patient. However, when Catherine decides that she must leave her father’s house, despite not making any effort to leave it, she actively avoids taking the position of patient.

> Catherine’s days, at this time, were dismal, and the weight of some of her hours was almost more that she could bear. Her father never looked at her, never spoke to her. He knew perfectly what he was about, and this was part of a plan. She looked at him as much as she dared (for she was afraid of seeming to offer herself to his observation). (118)

His observation is clinical: the games he plays with Catherine resemble that of the psychoanalyst who observes and judges everything, and then provokes a reaction.

At her cousin Marian’s engagement party she wonders ‘what would be the consequences of her saying nothing’ (17). This thought of Catherine’s seems almost rebellious as she wonders what sort of punishment she will receive for being silent. While her silence towards her father is a sign of power and rebellion, here, it seems to be a symbol of a total lack of connection with the stifling society around her. Her interlocutor, Morris, finds it agreeable and continues talking *to* her, not *with* her. The narrator observes that he does all the talking and the references to Catherine’s silence in this passage are numerous; ‘She answered nothing; she only listened’, ‘she felt tongue-tied’, and ‘she gave no audible assent’ (17). It is Morris’s beauty of speech that Catherine observes, not the content of what he says.

When he leaves her he says, “We shall meet again,” causing Catherine to think this a ‘very original speech’ (19) showing her lack of knowledge in the art of conversation and her naivety concerning dashing and cunning men. However, the party is the beginning of a change in Catherine’s language. The narrator says that when asked what she thinks of Morris, Catherine replies, ‘“Oh, nothing particular,”…dissembling for the first time in her life’ (19). As they leave, Sloper asks his daughter if she enjoyed her party.

> Catherine hesitated a moment; and then, looking away, ‘I am rather tired,’ she murmured. I have said that this entertainment was the beginning of something important for Catherine. For the second time in her life she made an indirect answer; and the beginning of a period of dissimulation is certainly a significant date. (21)

By meeting Morris at this party and therefore causing the series of events that eventually divides the triad, the narrator marks this date as significant, not for Morris, but for Catherine’s first attempts at playing with language and using evasive techniques. Bell remarks that ‘Out of her dilemma, an authenticity of silence emerges, a resistance to the betrayals of expression’ (53). Catherine does use silence to prevent her father gaining knowledge of her thoughts; she also remains silent to his eventual chagrin and therefore as punishment for his oppression.

Later Sloper remarks that his interest is in the point ‘where the adoration stops’ (112) and we see this point begin to emerge here. Catherine’s adoration for her father begins to compete with her gradual dislike of him. In this scene, we see her start to avoid her father’s gaze and she starts murmuring and avoiding direct speech.

In the cab on the way home, a scene unravels where we get a sense of the domestic and verbal abuse that Catherine suffers. Mrs. Penniman teases Catherine with Morris’s interest. When she replies to Sloper’s question as to whether Morris is in love with his daughter her aunt replies ‘I don’t know that; but he admired her dress’ (22). Sloper has already told

Catherine in a tone filled with irony that she is over-dressed and should not look as if she has eighty thousand a year, therefore Mrs. Penniman hits the mark and Morris's motives are revealed very early on in the novel. However, Catherine's responses are minimal: repeatedly in the novel she exclaims with such epithets as 'Oh, Aunt Penniman' or 'Oh, father'. It is also the start of her involuntary speech, and Catherine surprises herself with such lack of control. Such phrases as '"Well he is!" Catherine exclaimed, before she knew it' (22) are never fully developed, and the involuntary shrieks or the muffled screams similar to those emitted by Nora, are reined in and rarely repeated. Catherine does not have the temperament for sobbing uncontrollably. Dr Sloper has no patience for her fatigue and lethargy which are more commonly associated with neurasthenia.

Despite his medical expertise that focuses on women and their problems, we assume he is used to the hysterics, and not the neurasthenics: the difference being that he is used to some form of hysterical reaction that manifests itself in a physical symptom. His patients, therefore, are of a different temperament to Catherine. For most of the novel, she is quiet and still. At the end of this chapter, Catherine even refuses to pronounce Morris's name.

> "Catherine, dear, what was the gentleman's name?" For a minute, if it had not been for the rumbling of the carriage, you might have heard a pin drop. 'I don't know, Aunt Lavinia,' said Catherine, very softly. And, with all his irony, her father believed her. (23)

It seems Dr Sloper's irony betrays him, as he cannot imagine his daughter would tell an untruth. At the same time, this unwillingness to say his name, or let others know she knows his name, is a denial of the existence of an intruder on the edge of the safe enclosure between her father and herself.

Catherine, despite (and to Mrs Penniman's dismay), having no hysterical disposition, does instead have undercurrents of violence within her that emerge through her speech.

> This was all the more reason, however, though she was ashamed and uncomfortable, why she should tell her father that Mr Morris Townsend had called again. She announced the fact abruptly, almost violently, as soon as the Doctor came into the house; and having done so – it was her duty – she took measures to leave the room. (32)

As soon as Catherine speaks boldly, she feels she must immediately retreat and so she hurries out. Sloper's ironic remarks to this are cruel. He asks her if Morris has proposed and Catherine would like to reply with sharpness, 'She would have liked also, in denying it, to be a little positive, a little sharp, so that he would perhaps not ask the question again' (32). However, despite this reactive rage, Catherine decides to take the joke and replies, 'Perhaps he will do it the next time' (32). This remark paralyses Sloper, who cannot believe his daughter has responded with sarcasm.

Sloper is aware that Catherine's quietness could in fact be a cover: 'If it were true that she was in love, she was certainly very quiet about it; but the Doctor was of course prepared to admit that her quietness might mean volumes' (41). It is possible that he is aware that Catherine is silent for a reason, but he cannot determine those reasons.

Catherine's private life appears to the reader in other ways, as Lauren Berlant detects;

> Gluttony creates for Catherine a private, protected space, invulnerable to others because secret. Although in her defensiveness toward her father she seems reluctant to internalise unpleasant stimuli, Catherine's gluttony shows that she can incorporate and digest that which doesn't manifestly threaten her. (72)

This gluttony alludes to the narrator's comments at the beginning of the novel in which Catherine spends her money on cream cakes, another form of extravagance like the dresses she likes to buy. Catherine's 'cream-cake love', so called by Berlant, is important, not just for its allusions to Catherine's private world, but for its associations with silence and the Victorian woman. Berlant says 'Catherine's mouth is the marked locus of attention as she emerges from her veil of silence' (76). I think rather that gluttony and the stuffing of cream cakes symbolises the literal self-silencing of Catherine's mouth, one that she chooses to do

as a young girl, and then continues so that the gluttony is replaced by repression. The Victorian image of the angel in the house cannot be an angel who looks and eats like a glutton, and so James twists the model around to show Catherine, although silent and good, will never fully be the ideal woman her father wishes her to be.

The focus on Catherine's mouth and voice widens when they travel to Europe. Here, Sloper's imaginary hand reaches out for Catherine's throat in an effort not only to silence but conversely to strangle a cry from her stubbornly silent self. James has written into his novel the characters of wicked stepmother and tyrannical father, placed Catherine and her father in a scene suitable for European gothic, and a suggestion that her father may strangle her, and still Catherine refuses to react appropriately and voice her anger at her father.

The two important scenes in Sloper's study demonstrate the effect repressed speech can have on the body. The study is the haven of the tyrannical father who verbally tortures his daughter. The first takes place when Catherine announces that she and Morris are engaged. Sloper waits with irritation at Catherine's silence, and Catherine stares at the fire, finding 'it was much warmer' (57) than her father's stare. The meeting takes the form of a question and answer session in her father's consulting room. He questions Catherine's activities with Morris, and she answers truthfully, preferring to talk to the fire than face him. Catherine cannot look directly at her father, preferring to avert her face to avoid a reading of her own emotions. When asked when she first realised she liked Townsend Catherine replies, '"I don't know, father," the girl answered. "I can't tell you about that"' (58). Sloper expects her secrecy, and she starts evading his questions. With the advent of Morris, barriers between her own consciousness and her father's are raised; she begins to suspect that her father may be cruel. This starts to emerge when her father accuses her of having a bad conscience: '"No, I have not a bad conscience, father!" the girl cried out, with considerable

energy' (58). Again, the repressed rage at her father begins to surface as her sentences go from calm and quiet to suddenly passionate and loud. She then breaks into 'a vehement protest' (59) at her father's words. However, as the next paragraph attests, Catherine wishes this violence to desert her and finds she admires her father's eloquence of speech.

> The Doctor delivered himself these remarks slowly, deliberately, with occasional pauses and prolongations of suspense as to his conclusion. She sat down at last, with her head bent and her eyes fixed upon him; and strangely enough – I hardly know how to tell it – even while she felt what he said went so terribly against her, she admired his neatness and nobleness of expression. There was something hopeless and oppressive in having to argue with her father; and she too, on her side, must try to be clear. He was so quiet; and he was not at all angry; and she, too, must be quiet. But her very effort to be quiet made her tremble. (61)

Catherine admires him for this, as she does Morris, for both have a control and grasp of irony and conversation that Catherine lacks. The result of Sloper's style means that Catherine literally submits herself to this as she sits down and bends her head. She realises that to argue with her father she must meet him with her own 'clear' speech. The resulting symptoms of her efforts to be silent manifest themselves in tremors. Catherine's short bursts of violent speech cannot match Sloper's slow ironic pace, and her controlled efforts to keep her rage in result in physical sickness. James again comments on the physical manifestation of emotional disruption. Catherine's body betrays her: the tremors are not a reaction or a mental rebellion but a symptom of the verbal abuse she has suffered, and her attempts to control it. James capitalises on the very scene that Alice, almost ten years later would describe when finding herself moved to similar tremors in her father's library. James has found that the non-scene becomes a device used to narrate the story of the unhappy daughter.

The second study scene is an evening escapade by candlelight, when 'the house was wrapped in silence' (95). Catherine means to tell her father that she will tell Townsend to

wait for her: ‘She had immense respect for her father, and she felt that to displease him would be a misdemeanour analogous to an act of profanity in a great temple: but her purpose had slowly ripened, and she believed that her prayers had purified it of its violence’ (95). Sloper wishes Catherine would rise up to his provocations. While he plays the tyrannical father, he needs a daughter to play her weeping hysterical role. Nevertheless, Catherine unintentionally punishes her father with her silence and self-control, which only occasionally falter. When her father holds her with apparent tenderness, ‘she wished he would release her,’ (97) as if he held her captive in his domestic tomb. Sloper makes it clear he will not even see Morris again: ‘Catherine gave a long, low sigh; she tried to stifle it for she had made up her mind that it was wrong to make a parade of her trouble, and to endeavour to act upon her father by the meretricious aid of emotion’ (100). Again, Catherine tells herself to stifle her emotion, and the reader begins to wonder whether it is Sloper who is the oppressive force within the house, or Catherine herself for she has now learnt to stifle her own emotions before Sloper can do it for her. She has learnt to internalise emotion from her father. While she argues with her father for peace between him and Morris, she has also steadily tried to keep Morris from becoming an obstacle between her and her father.

To Mrs Penniman, she also stifles her crying: ‘the two women sat there together far into the small hours, the younger one with her head on the other’s lap, sobbing, and sobbing first in a soundless, stifled manner, and then at last perfectly still’ (104). However, both to make sure her father does not know the effect he has on her, and to confound Mrs Penniman, she turns out to breakfast perfectly composed. Catherine and her father do not talk of Morris and Catherine’s letters to Morris and his visits to her become less frequent. There is a silent assent that Morris does not exist inside the house.

Catherine's rage is finally transferred from her father and unleashed on Morris. When he visits her before leaving her for New Orleans, he tries to provoke an argument. He tells her that she is making a scene. She replies, 'A scene! – do I make scenes?' (158) Of course, Catherine never makes scenes and knows this. She becomes very forceful and even prevents him leaving the room by leaning against the door, and he tells her to be calmer.

> 'Come tomorrow,' Catherine begged; 'I want you to come tomorrow. I will be very quiet,' she added; and her agitation had by this time become so great that the assurance was not unbecoming. A sudden fear had come over her; it was like the solid conjunction of a dozen disembodied doubts, and her imagination, at a single bound, had traversed an enormous distance. All her being, for the moment, was centred in the wish to keep him in the room.
>
> Morris bent his head and kissed her forehead. 'When you are quiet, you are perfection,' he said; 'but when you are violent, you are not in character.' (159)

She realises to please Morris she must be quiet, and so she silences herself for Morris's benefit. It seems that it is not Morris's leaving that upsets Catherine, as much as the thought of what she has sacrificed: '"Think of what I have done!" she broke out. "Morris, I have given up everything"' (159). She has sacrificed the relationship with her father, despite its oppressiveness, and this leads to her final outburst. However, Catherine has repressed even this:

> She was smothered and stunned; she buried her head in the cushions, sobbing and talking to herself. But at last she raised herself, with the fear that either her father or Mrs Penniman would come in; and then she sat there, staring before her, while the room grew darker. (160)

Her muffled grief is a symbol of the repressive atmosphere that pervades not just *Washington Square*, but as with Nora, the young females in this northeastern corridor of America who are stuck between the ideal image of the Victorian angel and the future 'new woman'.

Having learnt to be the good daughter, Catherine must control the rage if she is to continue to be this image of her mother, which she will always fail to be. She must not

gratify either her father or Mrs Penniman by being emotional, and instead learns to keep her rage inside.

While she doesn't stay violent for long, the imagery James uses and the methods Catherine employs to calm herself show that her quietness is not all her father's or aunt's doing:

> Catherine's outbreak of anger and the sense of wrong gave her, while they lasted, the satisfaction that comes from all assertion of force; they hurried her along, and there is always a sort of pleasure in cleaving the air. But at bottom she hated to be violent, and she was conscious of no aptitude for organized resentment. She calmed herself with a great effort, but with great rapidity, and walked about the room a few moments, trying to say to herself that her aunt had meant everything for the best. She did not succeed in saying it with much conviction, but after a little she was able to speak quietly enough. (169)

Catherine's pleasure in her violent 'cleaving' of the air is an interpretation from the narrator, and we do not know if Catherine felt the same pleasure. Catherine hates the rage within her. The narrator himself is unsure as to Catherine's state of mind or actions, for we are told, 'It was almost the last outbreak of passion of her life; at least, she never indulged in another that the world knew anything about' (160) and later when Mrs Penniman knocks at Catherine's door, 'she was *apparently* quiet' (171) (my italics). This uncertainty is not only in Mrs Penniman's thoughts, but in the narrator's, and so Catherine not only appears mysterious to her aunt and her father, but now the narrator, and there can be no ultimate narrative of Catherine except her own.

The narrator continually finds it hard to represent Catherine's story. The narrator is quick to remind the reader that when Catherine receives a kiss from Morris,

> She had not been waiting for it, and she had never said to herself that at a given moment it must come. As I have tried to explain, she was not eager and exacting; she took what was given her from day to day; and if the delightful custom of her lover's visits, which yielded to her a happiness in which confidence and timidity were strangely blended, had suddenly come to an end, she would not only not have spoken of herself as one of the forsaken, but she would not have thought of herself as one of the disappointed. (54)

The narrator finds himself having to enunciate and emphasise his descriptions of Catherine's personality, as if his previous attempts have not been made clear. Catherine seems to elude his explanations and commentaries, and her mysteriousness and shifting qualities make it hard, James shows us, for the narrator to narrate (correctly and clearly) her story.

Here, he hesitantly explores the effects of Catherine's thoughts and emotions on her physical state. When her aunt tells her she has seen Morris Townsend again, years later and after Sloper is dead, the narrator says:

> If Catherine was surprised, she checked the expression of it; she gave neither a start nor an exclamation. She remained, indeed, for some moments intensely still, and this may very well have been a symptom of emotion (187).

The narrator's hesitant 'may very well' shows James's interest in the effects of repression on women, something James would continually repeat in later novels. He explores, through his uncertain narrator, the theory that a traumatic event or memory will affect the emotions and actions of a person. Here, Catherine does not react to the news of more meddling from her aunt and yet her inaction is highlighted. The control Catherine exerts over her body and expression has come about through years of practice of the withholding of expression from her father.

Often the narrator comments on Catherine's non-action when confronted with oppressive authority, and her silence and stillness instead of verbal reactions are quietly alluded to. The narrator often points out things that Catherine is unaware of and these constructions of Catherine are attempts to add to her narrated story and manipulate the reader's response. The narrator in effect tries to bridge the gap between what Catherine should be thinking and

what she is thinking. He attempts to predict her thoughts: unable to read them, he must comment on what she should be thinking. We do not get Catherine's thoughts directly and her slipperiness within this text is similar to Nora and as we will see, to the stories of Bertha and Elma.

Judith Butler discusses Catherine's last scene with Morris and her response to his proposal that they remain friends:

> Her response does not take the form of words but rather an extended silence, as if whatever meaning this refusal has for her will not and cannot appear in speech…Her action, her non-action, cannot be easily translated, and this means that she marks the limits of the familiar, the clear, and the common. (208)

Catherine does use silence against her father to rebel against his cruel care; it also is another form of punishment towards Morris's own cruelty. However, her silence is also a symptom of her difficulty with articulation and is the visible result of trauma within the triad. Butler's idea that her silence cannot be translated is exactly James's point, because as her author he cannot articulate her reasons either but he does speculate on her symptoms and reasons why they are apparent. James himself appears indecisive and baffled as to why Catherine does not speak her mind to Morris, and so carries this theme onwards and into his future novels, expanding and exploring the feminine consciousness. James purposely creates a narrator who is unable to trace Catherine's story, and this is a reflection of his own attempts to construct a female narrative and his burgeoning recognition that he may be unable to do so.

Catherine's silence hides her secrets and an internal world from her father but she also bears his oppression through this silence. However, this oppression and damaging relationship with her father is something she has been brought up to respect and accept. It is all she has known and she chooses to live with it even after his death by not marrying

Morris and continuing to live in Sloper's house. Catherine willingly lives with Sloper's oppression and paternal dominance and she has found a degree of wholeness within this sphere. Her aunt has meddled in this constant relationship with her father and Morris is just the tool with which to do this.

James's explorations into the modern symptoms of neurasthenia and hysteria are very evident in this novel, and his lack of confidence in the domestic bind of marriage is reflected in Catherine's ambiguous choice to stay in the confines and safety of her father's house, rather than brave and fail at a poor marriage with Morris. James sees that Catherine is safer in her father's house, despite his cruelty and domestic and verbal abuse, and he brings together these elements in his second attempt at a psychological novel containing a complicated triad. He explores these growing thoughts and problems in women's lives; his purposely problematic narrator who has difficulty in narrating Catherine's story is recognition of his own problems with writing about a girl who is victim of her father and mother figure. James clearly sees Alice's own upbringing in Catherine, and he sympathetically portrays her arduous and repressive life here.

Chapter 4 *The Awkward Age*

The Avenging New Woman

The Awkward Age puts aside the ambiguous narrator of *Washington Square* and instead relies on a lack of an interior voice in any of the characters. Every once in a while, the all-seeing narrator will interrupt with a comment or a suggestion as to what is happening in any one character's mind, but otherwise the text is presented through dialogue. Written between 1898 and 1899, this novel dates from James's late period. Although a few years after his disasters at the theatre, *The Awkward Age* still resembles a drama, with entrances and exits from the characters, very little variety in the scenic backdrop and with the knowledge that each character is putting on a performance. It is concerned with the power of language and different categories of deception. This is perhaps James's most contemptuous representation containing some of the most vulgar characters, all in a society that values virtue and innocence in a girl, but gossip and wit in a woman.

The premise of the novel sees Mr Longdon, a figure from the 'old world' of propriety and innocence, become increasingly alarmed and shocked by the 'new world', a place that the daughters of the women he previously loved now live in. In Nanda, he sees Lady Julia, the mother of Mrs Brookenham and Nanda's grandmother, and Nanda's close association and exposure to her mother's friends trouble him. He promises Van a dowry if he will marry Nanda, while Mrs Brookenham plots a way for Nanda to marry Mitchy, a wealthy member of the group. Nanda thwarts this plan and so Mrs Brook decides to extract money out of Mr Longdon for her own benefit, little knowing that Nanda has her own plan which is slowly eked out through the novel.

Tessa Hadley holds the view that:

> Even from inside the sordid tangle of impropriety and treachery of *The Awkward Age*, James finds it may be possible, after all, to *talk*; there may be language, and even candour beyond the breakdown of the old law, and the old story; there may be ways of talking *about* taboo rather than simply inhabiting a language…It may be possible to imagine adults who can hold apart 'knowing' and 'condemning'. (65)

However, the taboos in the novel are not named but only inferred. The possible adulterous affair between Van and Mrs Brook; the homosexual monetary 'deal' between Mitchy and Petherton; the paedophilic liaison between Petherton and little Aggie; the cash for sex partnership between Lady Fanny and Harold; all these taboos are unnamed and Nanda is a party to all of them. Nanda, in fact, appears to feature in many triadic relationships in the novel, and even her mother is astonished to find out not only the extent of her knowledge about the various scandals, but also how far she seems to have a hand in and a control of them.

Nanda is at the centre of the oblique mystery that surrounds Van and Mrs Brookenham's relationship. She is the advisor to Cashmore on his affair with Carrie Donner; she is the object of exchange between Mr Longdon and Mrs Brook, and the subject of analysis between Mr Longdon and Van. The most interesting relationship is of course the triad of the father/mother/daughter. The themes found in the previous two chapters, of silence, interruption and fragmentation are also found in psychoanalysis between a father figure/analyst and the daughter figure/patient. This relationship needs a third protagonist to complete the triangular power relation. In *The Awkward Age*, as in *Washington Square*, the figure of the mother keeps both of the other two points in the triangle in their assumed roles.

Evelyn Ender, in *Sexing the Mind*, focuses on the figure of the hysteric as a way of exploring the gender divide, and how the hysteric articulates 'a definition of gender as part of a history of subjectivity' (2). Mrs Brook lives outside Ender's prescribed oppositions,

one that defies male language and instead battles with it. At the end of the novel Nanda decides to rejects both the hysterical mode of articulation and the game playing language of her mother.

The power relationship between Mr Longdon and Nanda is one of analyst and patient, but as with most analytic partnerships, it becomes ever unclear who is in control. Without Mrs Brookenham to instigate meetings between the two and to sway Longdon's opinion, the relationship between Nanda and Longdon could collapse. Mrs Brookenham's motives for such practice are monetary and to keep Van in her life and Nanda out. This will enable Mrs Brookenham to continue to enjoy the type of conversation that occurs where she has grown up. Mrs Brook makes her circle of friends seem so appalling to Longdon that it necessitates Nanda's removal to Beccles.

However, Nanda's character becomes increasingly obscure and mysterious throughout the novel. She is blunt and to all appearances, naïve in her declarations of 'knowing' too much, but it becomes apparent that Nanda has her own motives and plans for her life with Mr Longdon. While Mrs Brook thinks she has engineered this relationship, Nanda takes it out of her hands and twists the outcome to suit her own purpose, leaving Mrs Brook increasingly out of the loop.

Nanda never denies how much she knows, and is the most open and honest speaker of them all. It is presumed that by listening to the drawing room talk Nanda is ruined, and the blame falls on Mrs Brookenham for bringing her 'down' too early. However, we learn that Nanda is more than capable of finding out this 'knowledge' for herself. Mrs Brook says: 'She won't have a difference in my freedom. It's as if the dear thing *knew*, don't you see? What we must keep back' (106). It could be assumed that the Buckingham Crescent crowd are to blame for Nanda's ruination and fate, but in Nanda's conversations with various

members of this crowd lie chilling clues that point to Nanda as manipulator and performer, and in fact a counterplot emerges which Nanda is instrumental in making.

The Dangerous Mother

Donatella Izzo puts aside the types of silence she says previous critics have focused on such as silence as 'removal and concealment of social relationships'. She instead focuses on 'silence as cultural prescription and permission – in other words, *what* can be said and *who* can say what, who restricts or does not restrict the power to speak in a given culture' (155). It is supposed by the people in Mrs Brook's drawing room that they are experiencing a great freedom by talking about all the scandals around them in their little circle, but in fact, compared to Nanda, they do not talk bluntly at all. Their speech is peppered with verbal games and insinuations, and most of the time leaves Mrs Brook exhausted by the teatime visits. While Nanda is almost proud to declare how much she has learnt, and does not see the pity with which people like the Duchess look upon her, she is also very secretive towards her mother.

In this novel, the 'given culture' Izzo speaks of is changing. The culture of Victorian manners and prudery is shown in the symbol of the horrendous 'yellow book'. The subjects described in these books mimic the scandals discussed in the drawing room and are making their way upstairs to the Nanda's nursery (except Mrs Brook states that the nursery is no more and Nanda has a nice room all to herself to entertain in if she wishes). There are certain things Nanda keeps back from her mother, and she is more involved with Mrs Brook's friends, than Mrs Brook knows. When Mr Cashmore admits to having discussions with Nanda about his state of affairs, Mrs Brook replies:

> ‘She didn’t tell me.’ He gave a sound, controlled by discretion, which sufficed none the less to make Mr Longdon – beholding him for the first time – receive it with a little of the stiffness of a person greeted with a guffaw. Mr Cashmore visibly liked this silence of Nanda’s about their meeting.’ (110-111)

Nanda becomes the confidante to Mr Cashmore, creating a triangle, and possibly a occupying a position Mrs Brook would like to have had. As the novel progresses, Mrs Brook finds herself increasingly out of the gossip loop, and her daughter more involved. This stealing away of her mother’s friends I see as some sort of backlash or revenge for the “ruin” her mother has brought her.

Mrs Brook’s language is full of references to commerce and money. Her infantile manner of speaking noted and admired by Van, projects a sense that she has a great weight to sustain. Her son Harold, the gambling addict, and her unmarriageable daughter mean she will have to continue paying to keep them afloat until they become independent. Her whole mission is to keep Harold out of her pocket, and Nanda in Mitchy’s. In fact, her language implies that she will sell Nanda to the highest bidder, including the obviously named, but married Mr Cashmore. She suspects Nanda may have already been given ‘gifts’ of money by Mr Longdon but given Nanda’s penchant for keeping secrets, thinks she just hasn’t told her mother. She can only see a person’s monetary value. Watching Aggie we are told; ‘Mrs Brook’s sympathy passed, however, with no great ease from Aggie’s pearls to her other charms’ (250).

Mrs Brook sums up the part she plays with Nanda and Mr Longdon in her first scene with Nanda. They are discussing dresses, but the dress, and the act of choosing a dress is a reference to the complicity with which Nanda plays in Mrs Brooks’ games, and how Mrs Brook justifies her role in the triad:

> ‘Yes,’ Mrs Brook resignedly mused; ‘you dress for yourself.’

> ‘Oh, how can you say that,’ the girl asked, ‘when I never stick in a pin but what I think of *you*?’
> ‘Well,’ Mrs Brook moralized, ‘one must always, I consider, think, as a sort of ***point de repère***, of some one good person. Only it’s best if it’s a person one’s afraid of. You do very well, but I’m not enough. What one really requires is a kind of salutary terror. I never stick in a pin without thinking of your cousin Jane. What is it that someone quotes somewhere about some one’s having said that “Our antagonist is our helper – he prevents our being superficial?”’ (187)

Underlying this talk about dresses, a discussion – that is the only one Nanda and Mrs Brook conduct alone – is the most truthful and telling point in the whole novel. Mrs Brook acts as the antagonist to Nanda and Longdon’s blossoming relationship, which remains ambiguous throughout the novel. Mrs Brook’s resigned opinion is that Nanda will always go her own way, no matter how much her mother interferes with her life. This novel is also about the relationship between a mother and daughter in this age where the daughter is the ‘new’ woman, and the mother is fast becoming the ‘old’ woman. She finds out gradually that her friends turn to Nanda for advice, and not her.

As this scene progresses Mrs Brook learns a lot more about her daughter. ‘“I could have done much better at the start and have lost less time,” the girl at last said, “if I hadn’t had the drawback of not really remembering Granny”’ (189). This would indicate Nanda’s own agenda is similar to Mrs Brook’s own, of getting Mr Longdon to ‘adopt’ her, and therefore make her wealthy. The one thing her mother did not count on is that Nanda would want to abandon her family for it. Nanda’s motives seem to be monetary, but they are also romantic. While Mrs Brook’s questions and ponderings become more vulgar, Nanda recognises this vulgarity and responds with irritating simplicity and frankness to her mother’s questions:

> ‘***Does*** he, my dear, want to marry you?’
> ‘Yes – to all sorts of ridiculous people.’
> ‘But I mean – would you take ***him***?’
> Nanda, rising, met the question with a short ironic ‘Yes!’ that showed her first impatience. ‘It’s so charming being liked,’ she went on, ‘without being approved.’

> But Mrs Brook only wanted to know. 'He doesn't approve –?'
> 'No, but it makes no difference. It's all exactly right, all the same.' (192)

Mrs Brook has trouble with Nanda being liked for herself when she has to always play the role of witty hostess that so tires her. The conversation turns to the 'advantages' of being with Mr Longdon, and it becomes clear than Mrs Brook would not hesitate to place her daughter in the house of a much older man and be rid of her, thus keeping Van for herself. She also thinks she will benefit from Mr Longdon's wealth.

Mrs Brook, failing to marry off Nanda to Mitchy decides she must play on Longdon's appreciation and value of innocence, and so exposes Nanda in a pivotal scene that almost turns into farce. Mr Mitchett becomes increasingly miserable as Mrs Brook highlights his mistake in marrying Aggie, while they all discover that Lord Petherton, previously the kept man of both Mitchy and the Duchess, is now playing a highly sexualised game of hide and seek with Aggie in another room. He is trying to find the French novel Aggie has found lying around at Tishy Grendon's. She is sitting on it, and when the victorious Petherton announces to the drawing room he has found it, the group realise there has been a struggle for it and the book becomes, in light of Petherton and Aggie's previous rendezvous, a symbol of her innocence and virginity which Petherton, and not Mitchy, has wrested away.

> Tishy, after a stare about, came back to consciousness to account for this guest. 'Oh yes – she's playing with him.'
> 'But with whom, dear?'
> 'Why, with Petherton. I thought you knew.'
> 'Knew they're playing –?' Mrs Brook was almost Socratic. (250)

Tishy, who like Nanda, seems to be the only one who explains things simply, unlike the rest who read a scandal into every detail, explains the situation of the book, and Mrs Brook mercilessly puts the idea into miserable Mitchy's head that the play may not be so innocent. What follows is a discussion about the type of book it is, and how Aggie wants to read it,

and Petherton wants to prevent this. It would appear as if Petherton, the ambiguous character who wavers between upholder of innocent values and yet has no qualms about selling himself to the highest bidder, is trying to save Aggie from the book's indecent content. The language James uses, however, suggests the book is a symbol of Aggie's innocence, which is being physically taken by Petherton. Mrs Brook, of course, is the first to exclaim that Petherton has succeeded:

> 'See – he *has* pulled her off!' said Mrs Brook….
> 'Yes, and it was a *real* pull. But of course,' she [Aggie] continued with the prettiest humour and as if Mrs Brook would quite understand, 'from the moment one has a person's nails, and almost his teeth in one's flesh –!' (250)

Lord Petherton is known for the 'flare of his big teeth' (147) and this vampiristic quality seems to have consumed already three people in the group. Mrs Brook knows exactly who wrote Van's name on the book, and yet thrusts it at Longdon so he can see for himself that it is Nanda's hand, and Nanda who has been spreading ruin in Tishy's house. It seems as if Mrs Brook is as shocked as the rest of the group, but she rather takes a vile delight in showing her daughter up in front of the crowd, as if she is proud of the apprentice she has made of her:

> 'But it isn't Mr Van's hand!' – Mrs Brook quite smiled at the error. She thrust the book straight at Mr Longdon. '*Is* that Mr Van's hand?'
> Holding the disputed object, which he had put on his nippers to glance at, he presently, without speaking, looked over these aids straight at Nanda, who looked as straight back at him. 'It was I who wrote Mr Van's name.' The girl's eyes were on Mr Longdon, but her words as for the company. (250)

Mrs Brook interrogates Nanda for Mr Longdon, and Nanda, like a willing accomplice, admits to reading the book. Mrs Brook's main plot is to get Mr Longdon to take Nanda off her hands for good while Nanda, knowing she will not marry Van, decides the next best thing is to lead a chaste and virtuous life with Mr Longdon. Her life with him will be decidedly richer in every sense of the word.

The Understanding of Analysis

Critics of Freudian case studies, such as Claire Kahane and Evelyn Ender have raised the importance of the 'secret', which is really the piece of the patient's femininity and private self they do not want the analyst to reach. James's young female characters are always being found guilty of knowing a secret or having more knowledge than society deems they should. Van and Longdon's mission to find out what Nanda knows is hopeless. She expresses plainly that she knows it all but Longdon persists in pushing her to talk.

Donatella Izzo uses a Foucaultian analysis of confession to define her views on sexuality. She suggests that: 'power is held not by the speaker…but by the person who questions, listens and does not speak' (157). However, Ender also views the hysteric as part of a theory of performance, which would imply that the power is always with the hysteric. Nanda plays the part of the patient, while Longdon listens, waiting to hear all she knows, playing confessor, and absolver before finally taking her to his kingdom. However, Nanda knows that without her confessions, Longdon would not believe she was in earnest and would pressure her to reveal more, as Freud was to do with his patients. Nanda manipulates him, while remembering to play the part of the innocently ruined daughter and can be seen to be playing a role, delicately balancing innocence and knowledge.

Longdon in fact is an old hand at extracting knowledge from young girls. In a scene with little Aggie, he scans her face for a sign of knowledge but sees nothing:

> 'If you don't understand,' said her companion, 'it serves me right, as your aunt didn't leave me with you to teach you the slang of the day.'
> 'The "slang"?' – she again spotlessly speculated.
> 'You've never even heard the expression? I should think that a great compliment to our time if it weren't that I fear it may have been only the name that has been kept from you.'
> The light of ignorance in the child's smile was positively golden. 'The name?' she again echoed. (146)

While ‘Aggie the echo’ is a delight to talk with for Longdon, Nanda poses more of a problem, and often Longdon is silent, or his responses are cut up and full of pauses.

With Nanda and Longdon taking on the roles of patient and doctor, James seems to understand the weakness in the analyst/patient dynamic, and anticipates its role in medical treatment. Longdon is James’s compromise in narrative authority: through him, James shows his narrative method as analogous to the systems practised by analysts. James portrays a girl/patient, who turns the format of the analyst back on the analyst, as Freud suspected his patients were doing. Longdon’s need to extract information becomes a ploy by Nanda to further her goal of becoming his ward, and therefore his heiress.

The Preface to the novel, written ten years later by James, discusses the pros and cons of the freedom of ‘talk’, and the subsequent sacrifice of ‘charm’ (6). As we shall see in *Lolita* and *Ada,* we are given directions of authorial intentions, and James’s language is markedly scientific:

> You can analyse in *your* way, oh yes – to relate, to report, to explain; but you can’t disintegrate my synthesis; you can’t resolve the elements of my whole into different responsible agents or find your way at all (for your own fell purpose). (16)

Reading this text to fit in with a theory is exactly what James wants the critic to avoid, but which the analyst does with a patient. In, for example, the case study of ‘Dora’ and in the unpublished case study of Elma Pálos, Freud often sought in the patient something that did not necessarily exist. He would attribute this symptom to a theory he was often still working out, using it as an example of fact. James makes the text the patient here, and very boldly informs the reader his text will not be torn apart and put back together for any other meaning but its original. This of course leaves open the question of James’s intentions for text and characters.

The Hidden Narrative of Nanda.

Nanda is not like Aggie. Throughout the novel, the figure of the 'new woman' of the nineteenth century is discussed, although the term 'modern' is used in place of 'new'. With the rise of the new woman in the 1890s, came an interest in the idea of non-marriage as now being an acceptable option for women. With the marriages Nanda sees around her, including that of her parents, it is not surprising marriage does not appeal to her. Longdon thinks marriage is the only way for Nanda to be saved, but quite early in the novel, she has already declared she will never marry.

> 'It's lovely of you to wish it, but I shall be one of the people who don't. I shall be at the end,' said Nanda, 'one of those people who haven't.'
> 'No, my child,' he returned gravely – 'you shall never be anything so sad.'
> 'Why not – if *you've* been?'
> He looked at her a little, quietly; then, putting out his hand, passed her own into his arm.
> 'Exactly because I have.' (142)

Nanda's upbringing has made the option of single life appealing and acceptable, yet Mr Longdon at this stage, cannot imagine this for Nanda. Nanda is involved in charity work; she takes tea to her old nurse, and regularly stops in to read to the women in the workhouse. She is an educator, and has a life that is completely cut off from the scene of the novel. She lives an independent existence that also has nothing to do with Mrs Brook's drawing room talk: using her friends, the Grendons, she educates herself in the ways of the world, before she withdraws from it.

Silence, in *The Awkward Age*, is something to be applauded by the characters. Lady Fanny has nothing but her silence, having nothing to say, and Mrs Brook, who is never lost for words, finds this refreshing: 'Lady Fanny has the courage of all her silence – so much therefore that it sees her completely through and is what really makes her interesting' (167). Nicola Bradbury points out that in Nanda 'James presents a young lady deprived of the social asset of maidenly reticence, and develops a sophisticated technique of interplay'

(25). Nanda's refusal to hold her silence about what she knows destroys her chances of marrying Van, and this theme of punishing women who speak out runs through many of James's novels and short stories.[1] We learn about Nanda through the other characters, and like Longdon, we piece together these fragments of her personality. It is not until quite late in the novel that she enters, and starts to speak for herself.

Donatella Izzo battles with the idea of how James avoids speaking for his characters: 'the question here is how to voice the other without *speaking for* the other, without reducing the other to the self, and simultaneously, without producing the other as Other' (241). Like Ender, Izzo sees certain female characters in James's fiction as speaking without James controlling their voices. They have escaped and made their own dialogue. There is the sense that this theme is continued through so many of his novels, and this setting at liberty of the daughter character implies that James means her to escape. His own feminization of himself through his daughter characters indicates a certain parallel between his need as author to control, and his own efforts at articulation under a weight of restriction. As discussed previously, James portrays girls who have difficulty in speaking out because of the pressures of society or family restraint. Here, open and blunt Nanda does indeed resemble that part of Minny Temple James so admired for speaking out to his dominant father, and the part of himself that James held back.

Nanda's way of speaking defies her mother's crowd. Despite their scandalous talk, it is Nanda who forges a speech of her own, is blunt and to the point and often asks questions that make the likes of Mitchy and Van very uncomfortable. Her type of conversation breaks up her mother's group and by bringing Nanda 'down' the group is fractured and dispersed.

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[1] Examples are *The Bostonians* and the short story "The Visits."

Her mother, whose motives are of purely financial value, brings about her first meeting with Longdon. This initial meeting with Longdon conveys to him the danger Nanda is in by being 'down'. She says

> 'I shall see all the people who come. It will be a great thing for me. I want to hear all the talk. Mr Mitchett says I ought to – that it helps to form the young mind. I hoped for that reason', she went on with the directness that made her honesty almost violent – 'I hoped there would be more people here today.' (97)

There are times when Nanda has to stop herself from revealing too much: 'I shall be so careful with you that – well, you'll see!' (101) By stopping herself from saying exactly how careful with Longdon she will be, it appears Nanda already has her own agenda worked out and has a certain awareness and knowledge.

Nanda is aware that she is unlike her grandmother in speech and manner, and only like her in looks. Her reaction to this news, knowing how much Longdon values Lady Julia's memory, is to begin a performance and to fit into a role from the past: '"I'm glad to be like anyone the thought of whom makes you feel so good! You *are* good," she continued: "I see already how I shall feel it"' (100). An agreement has already been reached early in the novel that Nanda shall play the part of Lady Julia, and in return will be taken care of by Longdon. A discussion with Van reveals that Mr Longdon makes it clear what parts of her speech he doesn't like, and by making this known to Nanda, he is attempting to mould her into his memory from the past: '"But he didn't like, the other day, when I used it to him, that expression," the girl returned. "He called it "mannered modern slang" and came back again to the extraordinary difference between my speech and my grandmother's"' (131). Nanda's desire to please Longdon and keep a hold of her identity confuses her. Van, however, says he quite likes Nanda's speech. Nanda makes it very clear who she thinks is to blame for her ruined innocence. While talking with Van on the bench she says: '"Wasn't

it you who spoke to mamma about my sitting with her? That's what I mean by my debt to you. It's through you that I'm always there…Between you all, at any rate," she said more gaily, '"you've brought me down"' (133). The connotations of being brought down are not of course just down from the nursery to the drawing room, but being brought low thus the specific 'fallen woman' connotation.

When Mr Longdon arrives on this scene, he immediately remarks on the impropriety of Nanda and Van being alone together and Nanda, as if on auto-pilot by now explains first, '"Only talking – on a bench"' (133). She is learning fast how best to deal with Mr Longdon's old-fashioned way of seeing things, and can therefore manipulate the image he has of her to one that is more innocent, as he believes her to be.

On the other hand, Nanda's declarations of attained knowledge effectively ruin her chances of marrying Van. It is her honesty that gives her away, unlike little Aggie, who has perfected the blank, non-comprehending face of the innocent girl. It is also only from others that we learn that Nanda loves Van, as she never actually admits it. Throughout the novel Nanda repeats herself: 'Oh, I know everything!' (208), spoken with impatience. Later, in response to Mitchy about why she has gained this knowledge, she says: '"Why? Oh that's another affair! (209) Nanda keeps certain secrets to herself, projecting a mysteriousness that Longdon, Van and Mitchy find fascinating, and can't stop trying to get to the bottom of.

David Kurnick in 'Horrible Impossible' says;

> The novel remains constitutively unclear about precisely ***whose*** story it might be understood to tell. While Nanda's failed marriage plot provides the novel with its temporal horizon, the lack of almost all interiorizing narrative prevents us from naming her consciousness as an object of pre-eminent interest. (116)

However, despite the lack of an internal monologue from any of the characters, we can see through Nanda's projected identity in her language, in the sentences she leaves hanging, and in the words James uses in the text to describe how she speaks. What emerges is an incomplete picture of a girl who is created by James as the figure of the 'new' woman, trying to act like a figure from the 'old' woman, in this case a character similar to the Victorian 'angel'.

The Awkward Age becomes a very dark novel. The descriptions of the scenery are very vague and minimal; the dialogue and the silences are all the reader has to piece the tone together. In a conversation between Nanda and Van on the country bench, Nanda first makes clear the sort of relationship she and Mr Longdon have: "Between his patience and my egotism anything is possible. It isn't his talking – it's his listening" (133). James alludes to the now common thread in his novels of the analyst/patient relationship they have developed, but this type of talking and listening must go on off-stage as it were, for we never see Nanda talking and Longdon just listening. He talks a great deal, and in this scene, when Longdon joins Nanda on the bench, the tone is very sinister:

> 'So now you're getting all you can out of ***me***?'
> 'All I can, my dear – all I can.' He watched a little the flushed distance, then mildly broke out: 'It ***is*** as you said just now, exciting! But it makes me' – and he became abrupt again – 'want you, as I've already told you, to come to ***my*** place. Not, however, that we may be still more mad together.'
> The girl from the bench shared his contemplation. 'Do you call ***this*** madness?'
> He hesitated. 'You spoke of it yourself as excitement. You'll make of course one of your fine distinctions, but I take it, in my rough way, as a whirl. We're going round and round.' In a minute he had folded his arms with the same closeness Vanderbank had used – in a minute he too was nervously shaking his foot. 'Steady, steady; if we sit close we shall see it through. But come down to Suffolk for sanity.'
> 'You do mean then that I may come alone?'
> 'I won't receive you, I assure you, on any other terms. I want to show you' he continued, 'what life ***can*** give. Not of course,' he subjoined, 'of this sort of thing.'
> 'No – you've told me. Of peace.'
> 'Of peace,' said Mr Longdon. 'Oh, you don't know – you haven't the least idea. That's just why I want to show you.'

> Nanda looked as if she already saw it in the distance. 'But will it be peace if I'm there? I mean for *you*,' she added.
> 'It isn't a question of "me." Everybody's omelette is made of somebody's eggs. Besides, I think that when we're alone together –'
> He had dropped for so long that she wondered. 'Well, when we are –?'
> 'Why, it will be all right,' he simply concluded. 'Temples of peace, the ancients used to call them. We'll set one up, and I shall be at least doorkeeper. You'll come down whenever you like.'
> She gave herself to him in her silence more than she could have done in words. 'Have you arranged it with mamma?' she said, however, at last.
> 'I've arranged everything.' (137)

This scene shows the formation of an arrangement that has already been finalised by Mrs Brook and Longdon. There is the sinister side to this conversation that lies in the half finished sentences and images Longdon conjures up. What exactly is Longdon taking out of Nanda? In an analytic setting, as Nanda has previously described their relationship, Longdon is reaching into her mind, and taking out all her knowledge and replacing it with his own brand of innocence. However, the dark undertones of this scene make innocence a rather arbitrary gift with ambiguous meanings. Innocence cannot be put back once it is lost.

Longdon's nervousness and broken sentences are bordering on some sort of excitement that the 'flushed distance' denotes as sexual. His abruptness shows his impatience with Nanda; that she leaves her mother's den of vice and come to his peaceful haven, which has all the characteristics of being a gothic prison. However, as with all gothic prisons, they are often places of sanctuary, keeping out unwanted danger, and in this case, unwanted sexual knowledge. It appears Longdon's mission is to keep Nanda at the 'awkward' stage and on the cusp of womanhood forever, never growing up or marrying but always his young girl. To reach sanity at Beccles rather implies her mother's circle is one of madness, and to Longdon it is. James makes it clear that an agreement here can only be reached through their silence, not words.

Longdon has to be prompted by Nanda to finish his sentence, which he lamely does with a confirmation of everything being all right: these unfinished sentences by Longdon are filled with sinister possibilities and nervousness. Longdon's vision of a classical utopia, with the classically formed 'temples of peace' and himself as the doorkeeper, keeping out the Buckingham crescent crowd, but also keeping Nanda in, are rather similar to Sloper's vision of his house as asylum. Nanda's silence is thought to be consent, but the first words from her ask if her mother has consented this. She has, and therefore it is arranged, with no assent or denial from Nanda. Longdon's home is a place of chastity and purity, and he says Nanda can come 'down' whenever she likes. This implies she has control over her prison, and effectively, Nanda's choice of staying at Beccles, means she can also take herself back 'up', and up forever.[2]

A little further on in this scene, the narrator, so far kept very much in the background, spells out for the reader that Nanda, while in this setting of analyst /patient, finds it difficult to talk. For the first time, Nanda's contradictory character emerges; on the one side, she is very open and blunt, almost to a naïve extent, and on the other, she is very secretive and has trouble making herself understood. Further on in this scene, Mr Longdon is repeatedly struck 'mute' by her speech, and most of Nanda's efforts in her speech are to please Longdon. She is denying her own speech, in favour of a performance where she can please a man her mother has told her to please, for her mother's own gain.

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[2] Ender makes an interesting discovery with the French term 'Pudeur'. There is no English equivalent but it means a 'subject's withdrawal or desired exemption from the scenes of passion or seduction' (Ender, 51). She sees 'pudeur' as a defence for the female against 'provoked hysterical symptoms', brought on by these scenes. Thus Aggie's somewhat dazed expression, in this sense, is a defence against knowledge using pudeur. Nanda however, who is all ears to everyone's gossip, rejects pudeur and hysteria and takes a third option, one that she controls herself, and she withdraws from this society, possibly seeing her non-marriage as a relief, and takes herself back up, to be mistress of what will become her own house. It is interesting to see that Ender uses a classical dictionary to define her term, meaning strictly veiled or draped. Nanda uses Mr Longdon to veil herself from the 'talk' and retreats back to the sanctuary he offers her.

> ‘Why, don’t you know?’ His eye was now cold enough to give her, in her chill, a flurried sense that she might displease him least by a graceful lightness. ‘The Duchess and Lord Petherton are like you and me.’
> ‘Is it a conundrum?’ He was serious indeed.
> ‘They’re one of the couples who are invited together.’ But his face reflected so little success for her levity that it was in another tone she presently added: ‘Mitchy really oughtn’t.’ Her friend, in silence, fixed his eyes on the ground; an attitude in which there was something to make her strike rather wild. ‘But of course, kind as he is, he can scarcely be called particular. He has his ideas – he thinks nothing matters. He says we’ve all come to a pass that’s the end of everything.’
> Mr Longdon remained mute awhile, and when he at last raised his eyes it was without meeting Nanda’s and with some dryness of manner. ‘The end of everything? One might easily see that impression.’
> He again became mute, and there was a pause between them of some length, accepted by Nanda with an anxious stillness that it might have touched a spectator to observe. She sat there as if waiting for some further sign, only wanting not to displease her friend, yet unable to pretend to play any part and with something in her really that she couldn’t take back now, something involved in her original assumption that there was to be a kind of intelligence in their relation. ‘I dare say,’ she said at last, ‘that I make allusions you don’t like. But I keep forgetting.’ (140)

Nanda has already started to know how to talk with Mr Longdon. She can predict what will and will not displease him. Holding back, and knowing what to say in an effort to control an analysis seems to be common to female patients, but this only comes into being because of the at times brutal probing by the analyst. This scene is telling of Nanda’s innocence, her complete understanding of what she is saying and the meanings with which she speaks. Mr Longdon is shocked when Nanda implies their relationship is like the Duchess and Petherton’s. Are we to read this as Nanda’s innocent presumption that the Duchess and Petherton are just good friends, as she believes herself and Longdon to be; or does she know the true sexual relationship the Duchess and Petherton have, and if so, what then are we to make of Nanda and Longdon’s relationship?

Nanda knows of other affairs within the group, so why should she not know about another. The reactions her words provoke in Longdon make her realise her mistake, and she changes her tone to one of striking out wildly, lest she has upset him. This of course brings the conversation to the point where it displays Nanda’s true openness, and she

admits that she has been hiding behind the mask of her grandmother and performing a role. With the words, 'I keep forgetting', she again shows herself to be too honest, and admits to Longdon she has been trying to fit into this role, and effectively being someone she is not. James displays her fragmented identity, which becomes a focus for Nanda. Nanda finds that she needs to put herself back together. Fixing her sights on figuring out little Aggie, she hopes to figure out herself.

In a scene with Van, she finds that she has to restrain her words:

> 'Do you mean Carrie Donner? I don't believe it, and at any rate I don't think it's any one's business. I shouldn't have a very high opinion of a person who would give up a friend.' She stopped short, with a sense apparently that she was saying more than she meant, though, strangely, as if it had been an effect of her type and of her voice, there was neither pertness nor passion in the profession she had just made. (90-91)

Nanda often has to stop herself from saying what she means. Yet the reference to Nanda being a 'type' anticipates James's focus on Nanda as being a 'new woman'.

She has a problem with identity, which the reader is often unaware of due to the lack of interior monologue, and it is only when Nanda realises her plot to join Aggie and Mitchy has been a failure, and realises the difference between Aggie and herself, that she pieces herself together. When talking with Mitchy she says:

> 'Aggie's only trying to find out – '
> 'Yes – what?' he asked, waiting.
> 'Why, what sort of person she is. How can she ever have known? It was carefully, elaborately hidden from her – kept so obscure that she could make out nothing. She isn't now like ***me***.'
> He wondering attended. 'Like You?'
> 'Why, I get the benefit of the fact that there was never a time when I didn't know ***something*** or other and that I became more and more aware, as I grew older, of a hundred little chinks of daylight.' (302)

Nanda realises that her mistake when trying to 'save' Aggie, was that they lived in two different societies. Aggie was protected and Nanda was not. It is not until the end with Mr Longdon that Nanda is able to cast off the shadow of Lady Julia. The Beccles she returns

to, to live forever, is a place that contains a renewed but changed form of innocence. The change in Longdon, when at the end of the novel, he finally accepts this 'new' woman, mirrors James's own acceptance of this figure in his novels and society. Longdon realizes that he must take Nanda as she is.

> But she continued, with the shadow of her scruple, to explain. 'We're many of us, we're most of us – as you long ago saw and showed you felt – extraordinary now. We can't help it. It isn't really our fault. There's so much else that's extraordinary that if we're in it all so much *we* must naturally be.' It was all obviously clearer to her than it had ever been, and her sense of it found renewed expression; so that she might have been, as she wound up, a very much older person than her friend. 'Everything's different from what it used to be.'
> 'Yes, everything,' he returned with an air of final indoctrination. 'That's what he [Van] ought to have recognized.' (310)

For a man such as Mr Longdon, who has lived so long in the past, to accept Nanda as the new woman, and in fact recognize the change in women in general has not been an easy acceptance. James has been compared to Mr Longdon, because he too must let go of the past and all the daughters whom he created so much in Minny Temple's image. The relationship between Mr Longdon and Nanda can now stand on its own without Mrs Brook. Both have moved on from her group, and although Longdon accepts Nanda as she is, there is still an uncertain future for Nanda at the end of the novel.

The last word is 'tomorrow', signalling change, a new day, and a future, but Beccles is not a place that sees into the future, but the past. Mr Longdon is very much a hoarder of women. His home at Beccles is a haven for women of the past and he appreciates Van's own collections of photos of young girls: Nanda being in a 'glazed white' (27) frame telling of her innocence which she at last partially retrieves, and Aggie in frame of 'crimson fur' (26), a forewarning of her blossoming sexualised personality. The world of Beccles is very much a place for femininity and chastity. In gothic terms it is being described as a nunnery, with its 'old brick walls' keeping in the innocence. Everything is old, and it contains

'portraits of women dead', (197) and the reader assume Nanda will eventually inhabit this space. James's long running theme of dead women returns in this novel, and Nanda, far from being herself, as she is always trying to be, is in Mr Longdon's eye, a part of the dead Lady Julia. Her future is indeed uncertain.

Conclusion

Merle Williams says that girls like Nanda are left in the 'shadowland' (259) at this age. Nanda has not married Mitchy, the suitable candidate, nor has she played dumb like Aggie. She is the new woman, and thus her role and fate are before her. However, Nanda does choose the different route. Marriage for her was not an option, and by choosing to live with Mr Longdon, she shows relief in her choice. Her mother has used her as a chattel for selling, and now she has instead taken control for herself. Her mother confused her identity and fragmented her character, and Nanda has put herself together, through her own use and portrayal of an identity. After finding that Mr Longdon was still attracted to the 'new' form of Lady Julia, Nanda has been able to recognise and create an identity for herself. Her final revenge on her mother is not to keep Mr Longdon and his money to herself, but to take all Mrs Brook's precious social life with her. After the scene with Nanda's confession, she now takes tea in her own room, the old nursery, and many of her mother's previous visitors now join her there. She becomes the confidante to those involved in the scandals. The jealousy between mother and daughter reaches a bitter point when Mrs Brook tells her husband to make it clear to Nanda that Van decided not to go up and visit her.

In Nanda's new room which has been 'redecorated and rededicated' (281) Mr Longdon's Eden has still crept in: '"Most of the flowers here," Nanda at last said, "come from Mr

Longdon. Don't you remember his garden?"' (284) However, despite Nanda's willingness to leave Buckingham Crescent and go with Mr Longdon, he does not feel that she has really opened up to him.

> 'Ah, because you distinctly want to,' said Nanda ever so kindly. 'You've admitted as much when we've talked – '
> 'Oh, but when *have* we talked?' he sharply interrupted.
> This time he had challenged her so straight that it was her own look that strayed.
> 'When?'
> 'When.'
> She hesitated. 'When *haven't* we?'
> 'Well, you may have: if that's what you call talking – never saying a word. But I haven't. I've only to do, at any rate, in the way of reasons, with my own.' (310)

Mr Longdon refers to the talk he would like to have with Nanda. Nanda keeps some things to herself and not even the reader is aware this. We only learn a little more about Nanda in the snatched conversation with her mother, ironically, the person she is least close to.

Izzo claims that, 'James's writing is, rather, a kind of ***speaking with***: a writing that accompanies its subject without peremptorily defining it, that appeals to its reader to find her own paths for herself and to reconstruct relations as she may or will' (242). Nanda has found her own path, outside her mother's house and outside of her mother's language. With Nanda, James's writing and representation of the young girl has come a long way since his remark on his irritation with the 'precocious little girls' in his 1860s book reviews. In Nanda, he has created the Minny Temple figure that is blunt and honest and speaks her mind, but cast her against the figure of the patient. While it is possible James bases Longdon on himself, there is something in the young girl who wants to keep back certain aspects of her personality, that James may also identify with. James's view of the power relations between a patient and an analyst, which he would have certainly known about from Alice's experience as well as his own are placed here, with Longdon the listener, and Nanda the talker.

Thirty years after he created Nora Lambert, James has developed his representation of the young girl and his use of the narrator to portray the weaknesses and problems that arise out of the analyst/patient relationship. His dangerous mother figures greatly contribute to the fragmentations of speech that occur within the daughter's narrative, but despite this presentation of the stifling effect the mother can have on the daughter, the end of *The Awkward Age* shows his resolution and understanding of the plight of the women who are stuck in the non-scene.

Nora stifles her cries in the pillows, Catherine refuses to let herself become hysterical or show her father or aunt any emotion, while Nanda says what she likes and often forgets to play this repressive role and so is trapped in a double identity of 'Nanda the ruined' and 'Nanda the innocent'. It is not until the final few paragraphs of the novel that James lets Nanda cry. The non-scene that James has utilised in his previous novels implodes and a 'scene' actually and finally occurs.

> It burst from her, flaring up, in a queer quaver that ended in something queerer still – in her abrupt collapse, on the spot, into the nearest chair, where she choked with a torrent of tears. Her buried face could only after a moment give way to the flood, and she sobbed in a passion as sharp and brief as the flurry of a wild thing for an instant uncaged. (308)

It was only four years before, in 1895 (when James started writing this novel) that Robert Edes had speculated that it would be better for the neurasthenic to scream rather than repress her feelings.[3] James must have noted this for he allows Nanda to give vent to her emotions, which has the effect of bringing on her decision to stay with Longdon. While James did not start analysis for another ten years with Putnam, he was aware of the treatment, and his exploration of this treatment through his fictional daughters leaves the reader with an uneasy sense of James's own enigmatic narrative.

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[3] See previous chapter

Part II

Narrating Trauma: The Submerged Voice of the Female Case History

Prologue

Henry James presents characters in situations that mirror the doctor/patient relationships that were to emerge before the end of the nineteenth century. His portrayal of fathers who try to extract a narrative from the silent daughter prefigures the emerging analyst who tries to prompt a narrative of trauma out of his female patient. These sometimes 'forced' narratives, were often as harmful, if not more so, than the traumatic events preceding them, as the analyst's attempts to give a voice to the patient became a struggle to find a narrative to fit into a theory rather than a method of treatment.

The transmissibility of these case study narratives is problematic. The patient is subject to her doctor and often cannot articulate her story, which is dependent on memory and flashbacks, and sometimes a refusal to remember or narrate. When a narrative of trauma is published, it is a secondary narrative subject to the bias and creativity of the doctor. Trauma has been described by Roger Luckhurst (2008) as anti-narrative or at the very least an aporia in narrative, an irresolvable contradiction in a text. What appears in the analyst's consulting room is a doctor/patient relationship that produces a fragmented narrative, full of gaps that the analyst has to interpret. The result is that the patient's narrative has been diluted and 'invented'.

Through reading James's chronology of writing, (*Watch and Ward*, *Washington Square* and *The Awkward Age*) it becomes apparent that he recognizes the difficulties an author encounters when trying to mimic a female narrative. His novels become revisited attempts to find a way to produce a narrator to 'speak' for the daughter. His insight into the doctor/patient scenario led to his focus on the fragmentary effects of the daughter's efforts of articulation and the observation that the father and daughter are not alone in their power struggle. His account of the dangerous mother figure who encourages or disturbs the

father/daughter relationship and affects the daughter's ability to speak, is also to be found in the case studies of 'Anna O' and Elma Pálos. Life follows art, in this case.

In analyzing James's novels, critics have often focused on the father/daughter relationship as the origin of destruction, but as I reveal, his novels point towards the mother figure as having a detrimental effect on the daughter's speech and mental health. Various scenes in these novels show that James, and as we will later see that Nabokov, views the mother's actions as having far more damaging consequences. This is revealed in the construction of the case studies of 'Anna O' and Elma Pálos.

In these case studies, there is a gap between the published case history and the 'true' story, which often emerges after the case history has been published and scrutinised by eager critics. Research into these patients' stories shows that over the years, critics who have been attempting to piece together this authentic narrative have themselves often twisted the information or blatantly misrepresented facts, so the stories of 'Anna O' and Elma Pálos become more like myths with multiple authors. James's and Nabokov's position as Author is reflected in the struggles their characters face with conveying a voice and a narrative. This struggle in fiction is mirrored in the issues 'Anna O' and Elma Pálos contend with as their own story is taken out of their hands and placed in those of others.

In *Watch and Ward* James began to experiment with representing mother figures and tested the levels of damage a silencing mother figure could wreak on the daughter. In *Washington Square,* he created a meddling Aunt. He created a narrator who could not quite tell the daughter's story until in *The Awkward Age* he makes the reader recoil at the vulgar world of characters masquerading as scientists in their endeavour to analyse the daughter's narrative. He anticipates the often shady and cruel methods developed and tested by analysts just as he shares with them the problem of narrating a female case study/narrative.

His own experiments with representations of the fragmented daughter reflect the experiments of the analysts and menacing efforts of the mother figures to repress and reduce the daughter to silence.

Chapter Five

The Hidden Voice of Bertha Pappenheim

In 1880, Josef Breuer was to meet Bertha Pappenheim who would not only change the course of psychology, but also effectively alter the sometimes horrific treatment given to women thought to have hysteria and mental illness. Up until the mid-1890s, a personality disorder was thought to derive from the body, and painful and tortuous procedures were administered to women.[1] When Bertha was thought to have talked her way out of her hysteric symptoms, psychoanalysis was born, and women could breathe a sigh of relief. Now instead of delving into women's bodies, science had progressed and doctors sought to explore women's minds.

Freud and Breuer's *Studies on Hysteria* was published in 1895, and contains an account of the case history of 'Anna O', a pseudonym given to Bertha. Breuer pieced together this account through fragments of his jumbled notes made fifteen years before, and only at the instigation of Freud, whom he wanted to please. The case history cannot be said to be a true account of the analysis, as Breuer freely admits to omitting pieces of it. In the light of later evidence, which will be explored, it merely contains descriptive details of the symptoms of the patient and her subsequent cure. In this account, Breuer does not suggest reasons why Bertha became a hysteric, nor does he examine his own role – the countertransference – in the analysis, as Ferenczi would later discover.

The published version contains the following account. Breuer first met Bertha when she was twenty-one years old, in the winter of 1880. She had been nursing her father, who was

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[1] See Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, *The Fin de Siecle: A Reader in Cultural History c. 1880-1900* ch.12 'Sexology' for details of medical 'cures' for women for the illness of hysteria and nymphomania. Also Carol Groneman, *Nymphomania: A History*.

in the room next to her, and was dying of tuberculosis. She had cared for him during the night shift for five months, thus, despite periods of rest during the day, by the winter of that year she was exhausted and so took to her bed. Breuer is very complimentary about her, and praises her intelligence:

> She was markedly intelligent, with an astonishingly quick grasp of things and penetrating intuition. She possessed a powerful intellect which would have been capable of digesting solid mental pabulum and which stood in need of it – though without receiving it after she has left school. She had great poetic and imaginative gifts, which were under the control of a sharp and critical common sense. Owing to this latter quality she was *completely unsuggestible*. (*Studies on Hysteria*, 73)

Breuer recognised Bertha's repressed and mundane existence. Having no release or intellectual stimulation she retreated into what she called her 'private theatre' (74), where she would concoct fantasies and live in a make believe world of her own. Her family were unaware of this private world because if she was daydreaming and asked a question, she would instantly come out of the dream-like state and answer without hesitation. However, throughout the course of her illness, the private world of fantasy would gradually take over, and Bertha would split into two selves, one that would be her normal self, full of common sense, and the other detached self, that would exist in her mind. Breuer said she was 'passionately fond' of her father (75), and was devastated when she was too ill to continue nursing him. Despite her dedication, most of her symptoms arose out of guilty feelings for some oversight in his care on her part.

She experienced 'absences' where 'she used then to stop in the middle of a sentence, repeat her last words and after a short pause go on talking' (76). Her other symptoms included paraphasia, (insertion of wrong words into a sentence), as well as a 'convergent squint, severe disturbances of vision, paralyses (in the form of contractures), complete in the right upper and both lower extremities, partial in the left upper extremity, paresis of the

neck muscles' (74). She also developed a nervous cough and experienced terrifying hallucinations. When Breuer first met Bertha, she was in bed, unable to lift her head, and barely noticed his presence in her room.

There is a remarkable similarity between Bertha and James's sister, Alice. Alice's dedicated care of her father and her hysterical symptoms which often resulted in her staying in bed for long periods mirror Bertha's own experiences. Having lived with Alice and hearing about her condition first hand, James would be familiar with the much discussed and denigrated hysterical woman. Written in the same year as the start of Bertha's analysis, *Washington Square* shows many similarities between the case of Catherine and the real case of Bertha. James's fiction shows him to be sympathetic to the figure of the woman who is very attached to her father, while also being caught between hysteria and self-imposed silence.

During the course of Bertha's treatment her physical symptoms seemed to improve at times, but she began to show signs of a deep pent up anger and rage where she would lash out and throw whatever came to hand, or smash windows in an attempt at suicide. However, although Breuer remarks on her repressed and deeply religious and strict Jewish upbringing, he does not attempt to connect this with her volcanic fits of rage. Instead, he sees her as a particular type of woman who is prone to hysteria, and therefore develops symptoms due to her own guilt or shame ridden feelings of not nursing her father correctly. He does not explore the possibility that her family situation, her upbringing, and the repressive role of women could affect her mental health. Breuer does not delve into Bertha's relationship with her mother, only once remarking: 'She found the presence of some of her close relatives very distressing and this negative attitude grew continually stronger' (79).

Breuer's visits would follow a formula that Bertha controlled, according to her sleep and somnolent patterns, (she would sleep for much of the day and awake in the evening). When he first met her, he says she would only repeat the word 'tormenting' (*Studies on Hysteria*, 77). Once Bertha trusts Breuer, she starts revealing more to him and allows him to hypnotise her. It is noticeable that Bertha is aware of her own state: 'At moments when her mind was quite clear she would complain of the profound darkness in her head, of not being able to think, of becoming blind and deaf, of having two selves, a real one and an evil one which forced her to behave badly and so on' (77).

The most noticeable and interesting symptom for Breuer was her almost complete loss of speech.

> Later she lost her command of grammar and syntax; she no longer conjugated verbs, and eventually she used only infinitives, for the most part incorrectly formed from weak past participles; and she omitted both the definite and indefinite article. In the process of time she became almost completely deprived of words. When she tried to write she employed the same jargon. (S*tudies on Hysteria*, 77)

Breuer says: 'As I knew, she had felt very much offended over something and had determined not to speak of it' (77). Breuer later tells us that her father had said something that had offended her; her upbringing has given her a sense of self-repression and therefore she withholds any protest and is literally struck dumb from this event. The self-silencing that is evident in *Washington Square* where Catherine refuses to speak out against her father's cruelty is shown here in Bertha's similar idea that she should not show her anger. James's representation, however, of Catherine probes the cause of the mother figure, while Breuer's case notes show blindness to this problem.

In March 1881, Breuer saw progress. Once he had learnt what he thought was the reason for Bertha's silence through hypnosis, he could treat her, and she was able to start talking again. Initially she spoke only in English, perhaps knowing that her mother and governess

could not understand her, thus she and Breuer were able to talk in a private language. He says: 'At times when she was at her very best and most free, she talked French and Italian' (78). Her recovery was impeded by the death of her father on 5th April. From this point, her vision got worse, and Breuer writes that: 'All the people she saw seemed like wax figures without any connection with her' (79). Bertha seems to inhabit a different world from every one in her family, and only at times lets Breuer in to this world. Rather than counselling her through her grief, he continues to try to get to the root of each symptom.

Her physical state was no better, and she allowed only Breuer to feed her, (he would visit twice a day) acting very much like a child with her mother. He remarks constantly how intelligent she is, and is astounded at her ability to read aloud French or Italian and translate them into English while reading. Yet he misjudges her little habits, such as rinsing her mouth out after each meal, even if she has not eaten anything, remarking that this 'shows how absent-minded she was about such things' (79). However, the rinsing out of her mouth could be seen as some sort of ritual, considering often there was no need for it. As with the term she used to describe these session, 'chimney sweeping', by rinsing out her mouth she seems to be clearing out the dirt. The focus on her mouth can also be found in James's descriptions of Catherine; her 'cream-cake love' disguises her anger, silencing any protest she might make. Again, James recognises and connects this physical manifestation with mental illness, and yet Breuer sees this as mere forgetfulness.

In the evenings, during hypnosis, which Bertha called 'clouds', she would narrate for him her hallucinations, and would feel better after and even draw and write until the early hours of the morning. She would also narrate fairy-tale stories to him, which he thought in the style of 'Hans Andersen's *Picture-book without pictures*' (82). She called this method, and the subsequent relief she felt after narrating these tales, the 'talking cure'. However, her

father's death had caused her to become suicidal, and Breuer thought it best to move her from her third floor apartment in Vienna, lest she fling herself from the window. Therefore, he moved her to a country house in Inzersdorf, near a sanatorium there. This was done on the 7th June 1881. She was to visit the sanatorium as a day patient, and Breuer visited her most days.

For the month of August, Breuer took his family on holiday, and left Bertha in the care of another doctor, Dr Breslauer. When he returned he found her in a worse state, and in the autumn of 1881, he moved her back to Vienna, and visited her twice a day. It was on this return that a change took place in Bertha. In the winter of 1881-2, she developed two selves, one that lived in 1881-2, and one that lived and repeated the same life as she had in the winter of 1880-1. With the aid of a detailed diary that her mother had written the previous year, Breuer was able to determine that the moods Bertha suffered the previous year were the same as what she was going through this year. It is unknown whether the diary is reliable, or if Breuer chose to match Bertha's mood to what he could piece together from the diary. Breuer's mission now, was to hope for 'continuous and increasing improvement, provided that the permanent burdening of her mind with fresh stimuli could be prevented by her giving regular verbal expression to them' (86).

He had to get Bertha to think back to the root of each symptom, and was amazed to find that upon talking about the incident when it first occurred, the symptom cleared up. This 'exhaustive manner' showed that the root of most of her symptoms, originated with her father. Her deafness originated from not hearing when her father came in the room; her not understanding when several people were talking at once originated from her father talking with an acquaintance; 'not hearing when she was alone and directly addressed…Origin: her father having vainly asked her for some wine' (90). 'Deafness brought on by a fright at a

noise…Origin: a choking fit of her father's caused by swallowing the wrong way' (91). Breuer surmises that her long list of symptom and cause all began while nursing her father.

Her hallucinations, which she struggled to keep at bay, were centred on snakes and visions of a death's head. A later Freudian theory would be to form a reading of this hallucination around the phallic object, given that Bertha sees the snake in her father's room. Having to nurse her father and see to his every need, she would be made aware of his genitalia and experience shame and shock. Breuer does not mention this sexualised version, and says he did not see any sort of sexuality in her:

> The element of sexuality was astonishingly undeveloped in her. The patient, whose life became known to me to an extent to which one person's life is seldom known to another, had never been in love; and in all the enormous number of hallucinations which occurred during her illness that element of mental life never emerged' (74).

His inability to recognise this 'element' in his patient would later be cause for his split with Freud.

In a letter to the psychiatrist Auguste Forel, November 21st 1907, Breuer writes:

> The case of Anna O., which was the germ-cell of the whole of psycho-analysis, proves that a fairly severe case of hysteria can develop, flourish, and be resolved without having a sexual basis. I confess that the plunging into sexuality in theory and practice is not to my taste. But what have my taste and my feeling about what is seemly and what is unseemly to do with the question of what is true? (Cranefield, 320)

This letter, written with seventeen years reflection on the case, seems to be an admission that he did not look for this side of Bertha, and also a recognition that despite this resistance, he should not ignore the truth. It has been thought by Freud, his defender Ernest Jones, and feminist critics (Hunter and Showalter), that at the end of the analysis Breuer discovered that Bertha did in fact have an 'element of sexuality' in her, and it made Breuer abandon her. Breuer fatally failed to recognise that transference had taken place.

Bertha agreed that she would end her treatment with Breuer on the 7th June 1882, the anniversary of the day she was taken to the Inzersdorf sanatorium the year before. On this day, Breuer's account says she rearranged the room to resemble her father's sick room, and 'reproduced the terrifying hallucination' of the snake (95). At the time of this hallucination, she had been unable to speak German, and could only think to say the verses of a child's nursery rhyme in English, but after speaking of this to Breuer, she was once again able to speak German, and according to him all her symptoms had disappeared. Thus, they said their goodbyes and Freud, Jones and Ferenczi amongst others all considered Breuer to have invented the talking cure. However, this was not the end of the affair.

The Myth of Anna O

The title of Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester's chapter on 'Anna O' in *Freud's Women* is called 'The True Story of Anna O'. Other critics (Hunter and Freeman), have attempted to write the 'true' story, but it has been swallowed up in myth. The sub-genre of 'feminist biography' has a bias towards its subject, usually that of 'saving' the marginalised female from obscurity. Judy Long, in *Telling Women's Lives*, observes that 'the biographer who elects to let her subject speak for herself and adopts a respectful, "hands-off" attitude may be criticized for taking a "weak" position (103). However, the inherent weakness of many biographical approaches to psychoanalytical case studies is the tendency to be over-influenced by what other critics have previously claimed.

Bertha Pappenheim during her stay at the Bellevue Sanatorium in Kreuzlingen, 1882.

Appignanesi and Forrester's chapter focuses on what many critics have focused on: the riddle of the extraordinary event at the end of the analysis. This event may be a false assumption, and critics have failed to recognise the most important part of the story, which is that of Bertha's actual illness.

Psychoanalytical critical literature has been subject to the charge of misreading, of publishing dubious references and of misrepresentation of events.[2] Thus, theories of alternative readings have been overlooked. Mistakes with names and identities can also be seen in the case of Elma Pálos. The inaccuracies that filter through the generations of critical analysis of these case histories distort and fragment the patient's history, and increase the often false impressions already laid down by the analyst.

It was some years later when Ernest Jones published his first volume of his biography of Freud that the identity of 'Anna O' was made known, (a complete breach of confidentiality on Jones's part). Jones makes a few mistakes regarding the facts in his account of the events surrounding that last night on the 7th June; the full account is found in a letter from Freud to Stefan Zweig on 2nd June 1932:

> What really happened with Breuer's patient I was able to guess later on, long after the break in our relations, when I suddenly remembered something Breuer had once told me in another context before we had begun to collaborate and which he never repeated. On the evening of the day when all her symptoms had been disposed of, he was summoned to the patient again, found her confused and writhing in abdominal cramps. Asked what was wrong with her, she replied: "Now Dr. B's child is coming". At this moment he held in his hand the key that would have opened the "doors to the Mother's"[3], but he let it drop. With all his great intellectual gifts there was nothing Faustian in his nature. Seized by conventional horror he took flight and abandoned the patient to a colleague. For months afterwards she struggled to regain her health in a sanatorium.
> I was so convinced of this reconstruction of mine I published it somewhere. Breuer's youngest daughter (born shortly after the above mentioned treatment, not without significance for the deeper connections!) read my account and asked her father about it (shortly before his death). He confirmed my version, and she informed me about it later.[4]

Jones says that when Breuer fled the house, he immediately took his wife on a second honeymoon, resulting in the 'conception of his youngest daughter and the girl born in these

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[2] See Gilhooley, D., (2002) 'Misrepresentation and Misreading in the Case of Anna O' *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 27, pp. 75-100.
[3] Allusion to Goethe's *Faust.*
[4] *Letters of Sigmund Freud*. Ed Ernst L. Freud. (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1992).

curious circumstances was nearly sixty years later to commit suicide in New York' (Jones, 247).[5] However, Henri Ellenberger found that the recorded birth date of Dora Breuer was 11th March1882, and not therefore conceived on 7th June of that year, but the year before.

There has been critical debate as to the truth of this hysterical pregnancy. Marian Tolpin sees this event as a 'guess' by Freud which developed into Freud's oedipal theory (165). Henri Ellenberger in *The Discovery of the Unconscious* takes issue with Jones's account of the facts and sees Freud's statement in his letter to Zweig as a guess based on Freud's use of the word 'reconstruction'. Two years later, Ellenberger revisited his theory ('The Story of Anna O: a critical review with new data', 1972) and presented evidence to suggest that no sanatorium in Gross Enzerdorf existed, as Jones had stated, and rather that Bertha was instead sent to the Bellevue Sanatorium in Kreuzlingen, Switzerland. Breuer had continued working in Vienna until late July, and so had not abandoned Bertha immediately. In 1972, Albrecht Hirschmüller published medical records found at the Bellevue Sanatorium in Kreuzlingen of a patient called Bertha Pappenheim. The records were written by Breuer and contained letters between the doctors who treated Bertha, fragments of family letters and writings by Bertha. Nowhere in these records is there mention of Bertha's pseudocyesis (Hysterical pregnancy).

Many other critics have attempted to solve the riddle of the 'birth'. By piecing together the timeline, the 'birth' of this baby has incurred much criticism for Breuer. Appignanesi and Forrester have speculated that because Bertha had, before this date, been reliving the experiences of the year before, it is plausible that the 7th June 1881 was the date of conception of Dora Breuer. For Bertha to be having a hysterical pregnancy on 7th June

[5] It is incorrect that Dora Breuer killed herself in New York, but in Vienna right before the Nazis knocked on her door to take her to a camp. The 1972 reprint of Jones's biography of Freud rectifies this mistake, but Jones is guilty of falsifying facts and has damaged his own credibility.

1882, would mean that in theory she thought she was having Dr Breuer's child, by somehow 'celebrating' the date of conception. Breuer ignored his own role in the analysis, and subsequent critics (Forrester, 1990, 18), Freud amongst them have seen this as a failure to discover psychoanalysis sooner. Out of the critical debate on Bertha's transference love for Breuer, and Breuer's lack of countertransference recognition, a myth has emerged.

A clear example of this is Dianne Hunter, who says she quotes George Pollock, who is in turn quoting and says he quoted from the Freud/Zweig letter. Hunter misquotes the phrase as 'Dr Breuer's child is coming' (479). The Freud letter as published in the *Letters of Sigmund Freud* clearly states that the words were 'Dr. B's child', not Dr Breuer's; these inaccuracies have continued with critics quoting other critics and not insisting on retrieving the truth, which should be the whole point of psychoanalysis. If the hypotheses of pseudocyesis is correct, and that the 'Dr B' was Breuer, then Breuer and Bertha must have formed a closer relationship than first imagined. Given Breuer's claim that 'plunging into sexuality in theory and practice' is not to his taste, can we really see him discussing sexually intimate details with Bertha to the extent that she knew when his daughter was conceived? Appignanesi and Forrester further perpetuate the myth by adding a footnote that defends Breuer but adds to Bertha's supposed oedipal conflicts:

> We should always bear in mind that there were other doctors whose name began with B. whose baby it might have been, in particular Dr. Breslauer at the Inzensdorf Sanatorium who treated Bertha over the next four years. (*Freud's Women*, 488-89)[6]

[6] Mikkel Borch-Jacobson (1996, p35) takes issue with Appignanesi and Forrester's assertion that the baby was Breslauer's for linguistic reasons. He states that the English translation of the Freud/Zweig letter does indicate that there may be another person involved, for the initial used is 'Dr B', but in the German original, Freud writes 'Dr Br' referring to Breuer. However, seeing as Breslauer's surname also begins with 'Br', I do not see how Borch-Jacobson can use this theory as an excuse to dismiss their assertion.

Dr Binswanger at Kreuzlingen was her doctor after 7th June 1882, with Dr Laupus. However, the day of her removal to Inzerdorf, 7th June 1881, was a traumatic event. Bertha chose this date in 1882 to end her analysis, and if she did suffer a hysterical attack and was reliving the past year, I think it is likely that she was reliving the pain of being wrenched from her dead father's home to a distant sanatorium.

In *Studies on Hysteria*, Breuer recounts the episode of removing Bertha to the sanatorium. He says he felt that her suicidal actions and psychical deterioration made it inadvisable for her to continue living on the third floor.

> Against her will, therefore, she was transferred to a country house in the neighbourhood of Vienna (on 7 June 1891). I had never threatened her with this removal from her home, which she regarded with horror, but she herself had, without saying so, expected and dreaded it. This event made it clear once more how much the affect [sic] of anxiety dominated her psychical disorder. Just as after her father's death a calmer condition had set in, so now, when what she feared had actually taken place, she once more became calmer. Nevertheless, the move was immediately followed by three days and nights completely without sleep or nourishment, by numerous attempts at suicide (though, so long as she was in a garden, these were not dangerous), by smashing windows and so on, and by hallucinations unaccompanied by absences… (81)

Breuer clearly connects Bertha's previous 'calm' state after her father's death with the same state before leaving her house. The following three days of trauma would make the move to Inzerdorf a date that would stay with Bertha as probably the lowest point in her treatment and illness.

However, in the newly discovered Kreuzlingen account Breuer writes:

> On 7 June 1881 she had been brought against her will to a villa near a private sanatorium. Here she calmed down after a while, though she always maintained a strong aversion to the place, distrust of the doctor and the others about her. Even now this still seems to disturb her and to cloud her impression of the reality of her present environment. (Hirschmüller, 295)

There is an inconsistency in Breuer's two accounts of Bertha's feelings towards Breslauer. In the published version, it is sensible of Breuer to write that Bertha 'took' to the doctor

whom Breuer advocated as his temporary replacement in the interests of protecting his own decisions and Breslauer's reputation. He would perhaps gloss over any resistance from Bertha, so that in the published version he writes: 'She became much attached to my friend Dr B.' (84). He goes on to say, that during this stay in the country 'it was impossible to persuade her to confide what she had to say to anyone but me – not even to Dr B. to whom she had in other respects become devoted' (85). Yet in the Kreuzlingen account, he says: 'Even I had to work hard, pleading, chatting and especially repeating the stereotype formula' (Hirschmüller, 287). Both doctors pursue the 'stereotype formula' instead of counselling Bertha through her present grief. She resists their efforts to continue the analysis by a self-imposed silence.

However, Hirschmüller's evidence has revealed that Breuer did not take flight as Jones and anxious feminist critics have supposed. In a letter to Robert Binswanger at the Bellevue sanatorium, he wrote: 'I hope that my patient, who has always meant a great deal to me, will soon be safely in your care' (Mid-June, 1882, Hirschmüller, 293). Two years later, on 13th January 1884, he wrote again to Binswanger and said: 'I saw the young Pappenheim girl today. She is in good health, no pains or other troubles' (Hirschmüller, 116). Through delving into unreliable material, critics have created a myth out of Bertha's analysis. Freud's future theories, including the Oedipus complex, would have their origin in Bertha's analytical case study and thus he is a beneficiary of the possible myth of Bertha's hysterical pregnancy.

The revisions made to the case study for the 1895 publication are, as Breuer says in his published version (95), because he had to search through fragments and scraps of notes. For such a groundbreaking publication, surely Breuer would have made an effort to retrieve his case notes. The effects of memory on Bertha's case study add to the aporia of the narrative,

but both Breuer's own revisions of Bertha's feelings toward her doctors; her feelings for her situation and especially her feelings towards Breuer have diluted the first-hand narrative. In an interesting comparison, in the later version of *Watch and Ward*, James revised a large chunk of Nora's character. Her personality, and James's presentation of it in the first edition, is very different from the Nora in the revised edition. With the nine years between these two editions, James had meanwhile mastered authority over his novel, and Breuer does the same. His case history reflects what he wants it to say, and not what should have been said. Breuer's 'fragmented' published first version has led to much later speculation and myth making from critics, with Bertha's story grown into a legend.

Chapter Six The Root of the Problem

It has been speculated (Pollock 1972, Schonbar and Beatus 1990, Castelnuovo-Tedesco 1994) that Bertha's mother may have contributed to her symptoms and subsequent illness. However, I find that their conclusions lack hard evidence and they do not continually focus on the mother.[1]

Rosalea Schonbar and Helena Beatus discuss Recha's arranged and therefore supposed unhappy marriage with Siegmund, Bertha's father. There is scant evidence to suggest she suffered from depression; only what can be surmised from the death of two of her elder daughters, Henriette and Flora. They focus on the object loss and detachment Bertha would have experienced as grounds for a distant relationship. Pollock likewise pays attention to the death of Bertha's sisters as affecting Bertha's upbringing and causing 'survivor's guilt', and the sibling rivalry between Bertha and her brother, Wilhelm. Castelnuovo-Tedesco blames Recha for failing to be a 'good' wife to Siegmund, before speculating that Siegmund would have visited brothels and sexually abused Bertha – all lacking evidence.

If we look at the facts, as laid out in the unpublished version of Bertha's case history and fragments of letters, we can draw conclusions based on evidence that indicate that Bertha experienced a damaging relationship with her mother.

In the unpublished case history, we can see Breuer seems to understand more about her home life, and the repression and monotony she has to endure: 'In her life religion serves only as an object of silent struggles and silent opposition' (277). Breuer notes that the family could have afforded a nurse to look after her father, but the task of night duty was

[1] See Elizabeth Loentz, *Let me continue to speak the truth* for a detailed analysis of Bertha Pappenheim's biographers.

left to Bertha, who would stay with him all night until her mother took over this duty in the morning. Freeman says in her biography of Bertha that all quotations come from letters given to her by relatives of Bertha, but there is no referencing and no way to check the accuracy of these quotations. However, her account together with the input from Dora Edinger (Bertha's distant cousin) appears to view Bertha's mother as having a central role in Bertha's symptoms. Freeman represents Bertha as blaming her mother for her difficulty and repression of speech. She writes that Bertha said:

> The first time I could not speak a word was when I had a fight with my mother," she said. "My mother accused me of leaving my father alone in his room for half an hour while I went downstairs to get something to eat in the kitchen. I knew I had been out of the room only ten minutes, and I was beside myself with fury but I didn't say anything. (Freeman, 44)

When Bertha took her first steps out of bed on the 1st April 1881, she walked straight into her father's room, but her mother prevented her from seeing him. Four days later, he died and Bertha blamed her mother for preventing her from seeing her father. Breuer, in the Kreuzlingen document, states: 'This was the origin of her disturbed relationship with her mother' (Hirschmüller, 284). Clearly, Breuer thinks her 'disturbed' relationship started at this point, but Freeman speculates that Bertha's symptoms were a result of her mother's blame and control. If Freeman's version of the events is true, then Bertha's anger and refusal to act on her anger and speak of it are remarkably similar to the same thoughts and feelings from which Alice James suffers. The "non-scene" in James's novels reflects reality, and while James was writing of the fragmented and speechless woman, real women were actually living through these experiences.

The diary her mother kept about Bertha throughout 1881 has been seen by Schonbar and Beatus as 'evidence of caring' (74). However, in light of the development of her illness, it seems more like a spying mechanism. Her mother would write of her mood swings, words,

and events on any given hour of the day. Breuer had noted that in 1882, Bertha repeated the same patterns of the previous year: are we to suppose that Bertha had the memory of her own mood swings to the date and time, or did her mother let her read this clinical diary, and thus induce Bertha to have these moods? It seems remarkable that given Bertha's state of mind, Breuer would actually believe that she was able to remember her state of mind from a year ago, but he does not raise the question of how this happened. If Recha did show Bertha the diary, she might well have prolonged Bertha's illness.

Breuer had noted Bertha's distrust of Breslauer, and yet even after Bertha had left Inzerdorf, it seemed Recha preferred Breslauer as Bertha's doctor. Dr Breslauer was always on hand with large doses of chloral and could be regarded as starting her later morphine addiction. In Mid-June 1882 Breuer wrote to Binswanger commenting: 'The psychiatrist, Dr Breslauer, who had the patient last year and earned our very highest confidence, has gone away this very week, and the mother cannot quite make up her mind without him' (Hirschmüller, 293).

Ernest Jones thought her mother 'somewhat a dragon' (Jones, 247) and while in Kreuzlingen, Bertha refused to see her family. Even before her stay at the sanatorium, Breuer remarked: 'She clearly found the presence of her mother and brother painful, and this negative instinct developed constantly' (Hirschmüller, 284). Finally, Breuer recommended she stay further away from home due to the situation of her home life. In a letter to Binswanger (4.11.1881), he said:

> An attempt is being made at this very moment to acclimatise the patient to her family; she is – or at least was – undergoing crucial convalescence. The attempt will probably fail. In that event, I think that I or Dr Breslauer will accompany her visit to you, as it seems to me that your sanatorium is to be preferred to the others as regards conditions. (Hirschmüller, 292)

It could be presumed, given the context of the letter, that these 'conditions' are simply space away from her mother and brother. In Inzerdorf she had lived in a cottage near the sanatorium with her mother, but in Kreuzlingen she would live in the hospital, and her mother would not be allowed to visit. This suggests that Breuer, Breslauer and Binswanger all had grave suspicions of the mother's role, but that Breuer did not follow this through in his analysis of her.

It is at the Bellevue that Bertha's feelings about her mother emerge and the effects of her upbringing are made apparent. In a letter to Robert Binswanger, her cousin Fritz Homburger says:

> In one letter she expressed the wish to her mother tactfully but firmly, that she should not yet have a visit from her. At this point I ought to mention that she is deeply attached to her mother and loves her very much – and for some time now – only at a distance. As soon as she in her company a certain shyness and reserve is apparent, which perhaps has its root in the fact that Bertha is very well aware of the inadequacy of her upbringing. She is also more attached to her brother when she is separated from him; he thinks all the time that he has a right to dominate her, and has often provoked her by his inconsiderate behaviour. (Hirschmüller, 23rd July 1882, 298)[2]

Homburger's tactful letter suggests that Bertha could not cope with her mother's presence. He mentions that in her company, she is shy and reserved, and therefore practically silent. Her mother affects Bertha's ability to talk, one of the main problems throughout her illness. His reference to the 'inadequacy in her upbringing', does suggest she did experience some form of motherly neglect, and complications arising from the death of her two sisters.

Bertha never married although admits to having offers: Hirschmüller says she once wanted to marry a violinist but her mother thought he was beneath her station. Recha seemed to repress Bertha, resulting in a sense of personal inadequacy. Recha's letters

[2] Bertha visited her cousins, Fritz Homburger and Anna Ettlinger in Karlsruhe while staying in the sanatorium. She became very close to her cousins during this time, especially her cousin Anna who was a proponent of women's rights and encouraged Bertha to publish her work.

suggest that she saw Bertha as simply stubborn, and not ill. Recha wrote to Binswanger on 24th July 1882:

> As for the loss of her mother tongue and the absence you mention, judging from my own experience I fear that these will increase in intensity when the present circumstances of her life are no longer a novelty, and she begins to be susceptible once more to intermittent past impressions. (Hirschmüller, 300)

Her ambiguity is suggestive of many things. The 'past impressions' could be the prolonged grief over her father's death, or simply boredom. Breuer had noted how intelligent she was and how she was not given an outlet for this. Bertha must have decided on nursing for a career, but Recha seems to dissuade her from this notion, in a further letter to Binswanger (27th August 1882):

> The idea of nursing evaporates – for the moment at any rate – as soon as we look into the principles of the matter, for even if she should keep to her resolve later on and is deemed "suitable" for the work, there would not be the slightest chance her being permitted to begin [sic] theoretical course. If she were to examine the matter closely, I believe she would change her mind on her own initiative. – You did not say whether her period was on time this week!? (Hirschmüller, 300)

It is unclear whether Bertha was not permitted to study the theoretical course because her mother forbids it or because she thinks her incapable. Breuer recognised her talents, and her achievements in later life prove she was capable of most things. The closeness with which her mother kept watch on Bertha, right down to her monthly cycle, suggests a deeper control over her. Perhaps instead of being 'under-parented', as Pollock suggests due to Bertha's sisters' deaths, she was over-parented and her mother became overbearing throughout her life.

In Bellevue, Bertha suffered from crippling neuralgia and lost her speech every evening. She would stay at the sanatorium for periods during these six years, and in her 1882 visit, Dr Laupus wrote: 'During the last weeks here she was obsessed with the idea of visiting her

father's grave in Pressburg. She would frequently keep a silent, tearful vigil for hours at a time before her father's picture' (Hirschmüller, 291).[3] Her treatment in Kreuzlingen lasted until 1888, and throughout her time here, it seems she did not manage to resolve her prolonged grief for her father. Breuer had mentioned that as well as Bertha being passionately fond of her father, he in turn 'spoils her, and by revelling in her highly developed gifts of poetry and fantasy' (Hirschmüller, 277). Before Breuer started treating Bertha, it seemed that her listener was her father, and her mother had pushed Bertha and her father together through Bertha's night time care of him, while also preventing her from seeing him before he died, prolonging the troubles in Bertha's mind.

Finding a Voice

In our attempt to understand Bertha's thought processes, we must look at her speech. The fantasies and fairy-tales reveal much about Bertha's inner life. Both Freeman and Hirschmüller recount some of her stories, which are always centred on the young girl taking care of the sick man. Freeman describes her first story:

> She said, "Today I made up a story about a poor orphan girl who had no family and who wandered into a strange house in search of somebody to love. She found that the father was suffering from an incurable disease and expected to die. His wife had given him up as hopeless. But the little orphan, refusing to believe the man was doomed, sat by his bed day and night, taking care of his every need, and slowly he came back to life. He was so grateful that he adopted her and she found somebody to love." (17)

It is unclear as to whether these are the words of Bertha or ideas of Bertha through Freeman's words. However, the trend in Bertha's stories, of young girls healing weak older

[3] Dr Laupus continued the Kreuzlingen case history of Bertha after Breuer had left her.

men, suggests the report is accurate.[4] Later, as we have seen, she would re-create the months when she had sat by her own father's bedside and nursed him. The situation that had caused her to take to her bed was the situation to which she longed to return. Breuer's statement that her father was an avid listener of her tales shows that Bertha found a release in her father. The 'wife' of this tale is excluded from this bedside world and the orphan is the heroine, generating a relationship where she has the power, and the father is the willing receiver of this caring.

Another intriguing story says much about her supposed lack of 'sexuality' and even appears to reinforce Breuer's theory. Hirschmüller reproduces another of her short stories: "In the Land of the Storks." In it, the young woman Kamilla is abandoned by her fiancé and devotes herself to the care of the children of another family. The death of the old stork mother, who distributes the babies to human parents, causes much confusion. Kamilla is then chosen as the new '"head nurse of the land of the storks," where children grow on trees until they are due for delivery to their earthly parents. Thus, she began a "full rewarding career" (122) looking after children.

This story was written after her analysis with Breuer, and shows no trace of sexuality but it does show a desire for motherhood, a role that Bertha was later to attain on a vast scale when she became head of an orphanage. She wrote other stories about men finding new meaning through the friendship of young girls: Bertha seems to be showing a desire to 'heal' fatherly figures, something she can attempt to do through literature. Her fairy-tales and her vision of the poor and reliant father are in contrast to her later work, which depicts saving women against the horrors of men and white slavery. Bertha became a reader and writer of feminist pamphlets and translated Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the

[4] She first published anonymously, *Little Stories for Children* in 1888 and *In the Junk Shop* in 1890.

Rights of Women'. Writing these stories before her analysis, she emerged after it with a mission to save girls from the horrors of sexual ruin, and even her poetry during her later life is more adult in content.

Dianne Hunter cites what she calls a reconstruction of Bertha's initial mutterings to Breuer: "Jamais acht nobody bella mio please lieboehn nuit" (474). Hunter's source is Ann Elwood's *The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis*. Elwood admits that neither Breuer nor Freud actually quoted this, and so her 'reconstruction' can only be a supposed example of the type of 'mumbo jumbo', as she calls it, that Bertha used. Something common to both Bertha and Elma is their ability to speak other languages fluently and their abilities in translation. With their own language, they have problems and Hunter's feminist theorisation sees this as defiance of the patriarchal rule of their fathers. Hunter suggests that: 'In the patriarchal socialization, the power to formulate sentences coincides developmentally with a recognition of the power of the father' (474). She goes on to say:

> In this light, Bertha Pappenheim's linguistic discord and conversion symptoms, her use of gibberish and gestures as a means of expression, can be seen as a regression from the cultural order represented by her father, as an orthodox patriarch. (474)

However, Elwood's gibberish is a reconstruction, a guess, and Breuer does not say exactly what Bertha repeated to him in his sessions with her. Bertha's creative writing is coherent and exemplifies her struggle with her situation. If the mother silenced Bertha with her criticism, Bertha rebels through her fairy-tales that see women as the redeeming feature of men; indeed the very genre of the fairy-tale often serves as a warning to women of the dangers evil step/mothers pose. Even Henry James would use the genre of the gothic fairy tale as I have suggested in my discussion of *Washington Square*. James recognised that to present Aunt Penniman as the dangerous and evil stepmother figure, he needed to use a genre that would add lustre to his portrayal of her.

The report found at Kreuzlingen includes one written by Bertha which seems to suggest her despair at losing her German language: 'I only get really nervous, anxious and disposed to cry, when the but too well motived fear to lose the German language for longer again, takes possession of me. (Hirschmüller, 296) Rather than a rebellion, Bertha's silence and inability stem from a refusal to speak the one language her mother could understand. Bertha has shut out her mother. However, she mourns the loss of her language because she grieves for the loss of her father.

It was after these six years, between 1882-1888, when Bertha struggled to get well, that she began to start her immense social work and write children's stories, poems, and prayers. She started working in the Jewish Girl's Orphanage in Frankfurt in 1888, and within two years was the Orphanage President. She opened a girls' club where girls could continue their education. In 1904, she was the founder and the President of the Federation of Jewish Women.

In 1905, her mother died, and Bertha was able to travel the continent, visiting brothels where she could hear the stories of the prostitutes who worked in them. Her attention turned to her own religion and her concerns focused upon the Orthodox Jewish who were legally allowed to practise polygamy and who abandoned their wives with children. As a result, she built a home for wayward girls and illegitimate babies.

In the preface to her collection of letters, which she published under the title *Sisyphus Work*, she wrote: 'I have discovered that one voice, the voice of an unknown woman, is ineffective. Today I believe I have not quite done my duty. Nobody is allowed to remain quiet if he knows that somewhere wrong is being done. Neither sex nor age nor religion nor party can be an excuse to remain quiet' (Freeman, 141). It would seem that only after her mother's death does she value the importance of having a voice.

Outdoor group portrait of the women on the first board of the Weibliche Fuersorge (Care for women society); Frankfurt am Main, 1904. Bertha Pappenheim: Front row, second from left.

It is her poems and prayers that are perhaps the most evocative of the feelings surrounding Bertha's past, and her philosophy for the future, one in particular written in Vienna, 28th November 1910:

> Woe unto you, you great ones
> With the strident voices!
> You are blind and deaf,
> Dragged along by soiled hands.
> Do not hear the angry voices,
> Do not see the anguish of poverty,
> Do not feel the people's distress,
> The throbbing heart still hopes
> To find deliverance through you.
> Let someone say to you just once
> How contemptible it is
> To make a footstool
> Of people's anger.
>
> The people are bitterly angry,
> But their power is greater than their anger,
> And the power of the sacred progress
> And growth towards freedom
> Through the proper aspirations
> Of the people themselves.
>
> The soiled hands rot,
> The raucous voices die away,
> Fertilized by streams of tears,
> New growths
> Will wrest themselves from the soil,
> From ancient roots-
> In spite of you.
>
> (Hirschmüller, 306)

This poem is full of anger, very direct and full of a harsh energy, but unlike in her preface, there is hope in the 'New growths'. Presumably, these are Bertha's little orphan girls, feminists and campaigners in training who she hopes will continue her hard work. The

'soiled hands' are the hands of those unmarried mothers and victims of white slavery whom Bertha tried to save.

Another poem written sometime in 1911 is more personal and quite tragic, evoking memories of her sad fairy-tales.

> Love did not come to me-
> So I live like the plants
> In the cellar, without light.
>
> Love did not come to me-
> So I sound like a violin
> With a broken bow.
>
> Love did not come to me-
> So I bury myself in work
> And, chastened, live for duty.
>
> Love did not come to me-
> So I like to think of death
> As a friendly face.
>
> (Hirschmüller, 308)

This very sad and lonely poem is reminiscent of the style of Emily Dickinson writing some twenty to thirty years before. Susan Kavaler-Adler sees Bertha's literary work as a direct result of her pathological narcissism and even associates her writing with such authors as Dickinson, Bronte and Plath, also calling them borderline-level women, suffering from 'repetitive pathological mourning re-enactments' (180). Freeman comments that Bertha did have plenty of marriage proposals, and could attract men even at the age of 70. Freud too, thought Bertha attractive, although he never actually met her. The rumour of the violinist she wanted to marry is in this poem, and her words such as 'bury', 'death' and 'without light' paint a cold picture of Bertha's lonely life. The idea of 'death as a friendly face' is not an alien idea to her, for she had attempted suicide under Breuer's ministrations, and so

almost thirty years later the thoughts of these early attempts are still with her, although there is no evidence that Bertha ever spoke again about her younger life as a patient.

A prayer written towards the end of her life shows her quiet hesitating wait for death;

> Softly, softly without ado
> Passes the time,
> Softly, softly without ado
> I am ready
> To walk with you.
> Softly, softly without ado
> One must be ready
> For time and forever.
> Who is it – You?
> Let me rest.
>
> (Freeman, 170)

There is repetition in quite a few of her poems and prayers. Bertha's poems and prayers that centre on death and the need to 'rest' are possibly memories of the feelings she experienced when hallucinating. Her repetition of these themes tells us she is not quite ready to forget these memories of her time in analysis when she did try to commit suicide.

When she died in 1936, she may have known of the horrors that would be directed towards her orphanages and friends.[5] Despite feelings of doubt over her work, there is perhaps one piece of evidence as to how she felt about her own discovery, the 'talking cure'. In a letter to Gertrude Ehrenworth she wrote:

> There are possibilities in human beings which grow only if given a chance. This does not mean that one need not talk over things which are not going well or that in constant cooperation nobody can hurt by sharing something. (Freeman, 203)

[5] When the Nazis decided to turn the Beth-Jakob Seminary into a brothel, ninety-three students took poison. They left the lines, 'Death does not terrify us; we go out to meet him./We served God while we were alive;/Pity oh merciful Father! O pity the people/ that know thee/ For there is no more pity in men'. (Freeman, 171) It seems Bertha's ability to see death as a release instead of something to be feared, had infected her students.

If anything the story of the case of 'Anna O' only highlights how fragmentally her early life has been laid out by first Breuer and Freud, and continuing this thread, by readers and researchers of psychoanalytic criticism. Their studies contain incorrect facts and quotes and thus do not piece together a true account of this intriguing case. We will never know who 'Dr B' is or if the event took place. It does not matter whether the father of the imaginary baby is Breuer or Breslauer, although this new possibility does highlight the anxious critics' determination to pounce on scandal. What does matter is how Bertha emerged from this analysis and how she felt about her relationship with Breuer, her doctor and stand-in father, and whether she saw herself as cured.

Given that there is no evidence that she ever mentioned this part of her life, her writings are all the evidence a researcher has, and how they are read can sway and even change a previous idea one had of Bertha. In a speech on the 25th anniversary of the Girl's Club she said; 'As you grow older and have your memory firmly under control you will remember only the things you want to remember and be able to forget the rest. I find this a very practical talent, ladies, and I recommend it to you' (Freeman, 144). It appears that a narrative of trauma will always be irresolvable if even the patient refuses to remember. A refusal to remember could be Bertha's therapeutic path, and is her reply to the invasion she has suffered.

One clue as to how psychoanalysis was initially perceived lies with Freud himself. In his letter to Zweig recounting the events at the end of Bertha's analysis on the 7th June, he says that Breuer 'would have opened the "doors to the Mother's," but let it drop. This Faustian allusion is a common thread in Freud's writing, and he sees that here, it would take a 'Faust' to discover psychoanalysis, as he did by picking up where Breuer left off. In his later essay 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable', he would mention again the character of Faust, 'to

whom many a secret was revealed' (1937-39, 245), a modification of a line by Faust. How Freud would continue his development of psychoanalysis certainly does seem, at times, 'devilish', and his pursuit of knowledge and the extraction of narratives from patients become apparent, as we will see, with the case of Elma Pálos.

How James portrayed his version of psychoanalysis, or at the least the doctor/patient relationship developing throughout the last half of the 19th century, was extremely similar to the real version. James saw the daughter figure as suffering from repression and manipulation from the mother figure, fragmenting her speech, which was further impeded by the analyst/father. Breuer met Bertha when she was in the midst of suffering from a lack of articulation and he points to the father as being the cause. However, Recha's destructive role in Bertha's illness cannot be ignored, and the letters and Breuer's unpublished record do reveal this. Bertha's narrative has become irresolvable because critics and analysts have tended to focus on the 'myth' that has emerged from this analysis, and not looked toward the unhappy origin of her illness. Instead, the myth has been perpetuated and it is not only Bertha's speech that has been fragmented, but also the complete narrative history.

Chapter 7 The Story of Elma Pálos

Psychoanalysis: A Developing Science

The early case studies of psychoanalysis helped form the many theories developed in later essays by both Freud and Ferenczi. The techniques and methods used since the conception of psychoanalysis are subject to change and are often a case of trial and error. In later essays such as Ferenczi's 'The Confusion of Tongues between Adults and the Child' (1932), 'apologies' and recognition of past mistakes can be found for earlier misdemeanours. The study by David J. Lynn M.D and George E. Vaillant M.D entitled 'Anonymity, Neutrality and Confidentiality in the Actual Methods of Sigmund Freud', 'show a substantial disparity between Freud's recommendations and his actual methods'.[1] They cite a number of critics who have collected evidence of Freud's misdemeanours and his unorthodox relationships with his patients. These indiscretions are shown most clearly in the unpublished case study of Elma Pálos. Three of his basic principles of the obligations of the analysts – anonymity, neutrality, and confidentiality – are all violated in the analysis of Elma.[2]

In a later essay, 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937-9), Freud describes repression thus:

> Let us imagine what might have happened to a book, at a time when books were not printed in editions but were written out individually. We will suppose that a book of this kind contained statements which in later times were regarded as undesirable […] At the present day, the only defensive mechanism to which the official censorship could resort would be to confiscate and destroy every copy of the whole edition. At that time, however, various methods were used for making the book innocuous. One way would be for the offending passages to be thickly crossed through so that they became illegible. In

[1] *American Journal of Psychiatry*, (February, 1998) 163-171 p. 155
[2] See S. Freud *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* Volume XII (1911-1913): 'The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works', 109-120, for Freud's recommendations for the practise of psychoanalysis.

> that case they could not be transcribed, and the copyist of the book would produce a text which was unexceptional but which had gaps in certain passages, and so might be unintelligible in them […] Single words could be left out or replaced by others, and new sentences interpolated. Best of all, the whole passage would be erased and a new one which said exactly the opposite put in its place. (236)

This can be seen as the perfect expression of what Freud did to his case history notes when writing them. The Freudian technique involves writing the case notes after the analysis. The doctor reviews the case with hindsight and puts his own thoughts and interpretations on to the actual narrative as it flows from the patient. Therefore, it is not a true narrative and the patient is denied, sometimes purposely, her own voice for her own story.

The Freud-Ferenczi correspondence in itself, without considering the Elma affair, reveals how Freud and Ferenczi 'procured' women for analysis. Usually, a husband or family member would introduce their wife or female relative while having analysis themselves. Freud would find that analysing the wife was more interesting and challenging for him.[3] Breuer was originally called to the Pappenheim house to treat Bertha's father. Her mother persuaded Breuer to treat Bertha despite the fact that Breuer was called to treat Siegmund as a medical doctor, and not as a psychologist. The women did not seek out a doctor for themselves. One letter in particular at the start of the correspondence reveals some of the ways with which Freud and Ferenczi experimented on women, tricking them into analysis and generally behaving with shocking indifference to the feelings of the woman:

> Dear Colleague,
>
> I saw Frau Marton today. It is a [case of] mature paranoia and probably beyond the limits of therapeutic intervention; still, she may be treated, and one can in any event learn something from her. Her brother-in-law, the physician who accompanies her, is an ass, he will probably advise her to do something other than what I have proposed. I asked that she go to the institution in Budapest and be treated by you. To get her there we

[3] Commentators have mentioned this process with the case study of 'Dora', whose father was analysed by Freud first.

> should employ the fiction, which has already been introduced, that her husband is the sick one, and that she should go along to look after him. After two days we could say that her husband was called away, and, as long as it works, we could keep her in an experiment to get to the bottom of her delusion. It is possible to influence her only in that way, not through logic. (Freud to Ferenczi, 11.2.08, I, 4)[4]

The triadic relationships that ensue from such correspondence all have Freud at their centre: Ferenczi and Elma, Ferenczi and Elizabeth Severn (also known as R.N), Breuer and Bertha Pappenheim, Jones and Loë Kahn, and Jung and Sabina Spielrein.

Freud, (front left) and Ferenczi, (front middle).

[4] In the early years of the last century, the postal system was such that a letter mailed from Freud would often arrive to Ferenczi in Hungary the same day, allowing closer attachments to be formed. The epistolary nature of doctor relationships, where blunt and unprofessional views are thrown back and forth, has not changed in the one hundred years since this time. My own experience of working closely with medical records and doctors' letters to one another, finds that a patient can bond two doctors with their mutual dislike or thoughts about the patient, without the doctors ever having to meet. The patient in that case serves as intermediary between like-minded doctors whose first concerns should be with the patient's well-being but are often with experiments and the progress of science.

One of the obligations of the biographer is not to distort any evidence to fit in with a theory, and the same is true of an analyst. Christopher Fortune, in his introduction to the Ferenczi-Groddeck correspondence says:

> By blurring the trail leading towards "the sources of creativity," do we not become guilty of a sort of falsification of the vital work of the very person whose memory we want to protect? In the first of his *Psychoanalytic Notebooks*, Charles Baudouin quotes these words of Freud: 'A work's fate does not rest entirely upon itself, but also in the hands of those who want to represent it and promote it. Where will they take it?' (xiv)

Throughout Elma's analysis, it becomes clear that her feelings and mental health were not the object of Freud's concern. Instead, Freud concentrated on those of his friend and colleague, Ferenczi, who had sent Elma to Freud in the first place. The correspondence between the two doctors records an incomplete case history with fragments of Elma's own writings. What emerges is a full picture of how two men used a patient for their own scientific gain, how Ferenczi used her for sexual gratification, and as a pawn within his own friendship with Freud.

The Case of Elma Pálos

My main interest in the story of Elma Pálos is of her fragmented speech, a result of being caught in a damaging triadic relationship. Throughout the analysis, it becomes clear at several stages that Elma wanted to abandon the analysis and her relationship with Ferenczi. Her mother encouraged Ferenczi to pursue a marriage with Elma long after both Ferenczi and Elma had decided to separate, thus prolonging the damaging effects Elma experienced.

The following account charts her analysis first by Ferenczi then by Freud: the triadic affair between Ferenczi, Gizella (Elma's mother) and Elma, and the effects of this on her life and

her ability to articulate her narrative. To evaluate the story of Elma Pálos I have pieced together excerpts from: the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence, the Ferenczi-Groddeck correspondence, and also excerpts from Elma's own unpublished letters to Michael Bálint, Ferenczi's literary executor. These letters are found in the Bálint Archive in the University of Essex and have not been used, so far, in a critical analysis of the 'Elma affair'.

In 2004, Emmanuel Berman wrote an article entitled 'Sándor, Gizella, Elma: A Biographical Journey'. The article is an abstract for a larger biographical study that was to have been published the following year. While it has yet to be published, Berman is still the only critic of the Elma affair who tries to see the effects from her point of view, rather than Ferenczi's. He mentions similarities with his own family history as a reason for his interest in this saga, and therefore his sympathetic comments are not without bias:

> With hindsight, there is something amazing in the degree to which the intense countertransference of both Ferenczi and Freud must have blinded them to the cruelty of the experiment, and to the hopeless double bind created by making analytic openness the precondition for marriage with the analyst. (Berman, 499)

Henry James had portrayed Nora, Catherine, and Nanda as women who were caught in the same double bind of repressed speech. Their 'analysts', Roger, Sloper and Longdon, all try to extract stories from their 'patients' while being afraid of what this narrative may contain.

Elma Pálos was born on 28th December 1887 in Hungary. She was described by Blaise Pasztory, Elma's cousin's son, as 'troubled and anxious, usually dressed in varying shades of purple and writing her letters in purple ink; but also kind, dedicated to others and in a way a martyr' (Berman, 504). In this way, Elma was very much like her mother, whose relationship with Ferenczi can only be described as masochistic.

The psychoanalyst, Ferenczi, had started an affair with her married mother, Gizella, in 1900. He had already analysed Gizella, thus she understood the dynamics of the

doctor/patient relationship that would complicate so many analytical studies. In 1910, in a letter to Freud, Ferenczi described to Freud his recent fantasies and dreams, and then analysed them. He described one of his fantasies thus:

> August 11. Patient sees (in fantasy) a girl lying on the dissecting table [as if in a caricature of "Le Rire," where a naked woman who is about to be operated on is surrounded by doctors]. A doctor holds her from below, binds her with a ***cambric bandage as wide as a hand***; another doctor operates on her…She wriggles her legs (feet?). Her upper body is separated from her lower body. As if screwed in. (17.8.10, I, 205).

The 'patient' is Ferenczi. He said that on that same day he had assisted his friend with a 'surgical intervention' (dental surgery) on Elma and described her sitting position on the chair to be as the same as the woman in his fantasy. He mentioned her 'wriggling legs' and her laughter at his 'excess of zeal' in making her a bandage. Even before he has officially mentioned to Freud his love for Elma, he has placed her in a sexual fantasy in which he has fragmented her physical body to resemble that of a dissected mannequin.

Young Sándor Ferenczi

Then twenty-one, Elma was analysed by Ferenczi who very quickly fell in love with her. Ferenczi maintained that he acted appropriately at first, but in a letter to Michael Bálint,

Elma wrote that Ferenczi 'got up from his chair, sat on the sofa next to me and, considerably moved, kissed me all over and passionately told me how much he loved me' (7.5.66, Berman 514).

By January 1911, Ferenczi had written to Freud discussing an impending visit, and mentioned that he wanted to 'use our presence to ask your advice in a rather difficult matter (marriage and love affair of this self-same daughter)' (3.1.11, I, 248). Ferenczi begged Freud to take over Elma's analysis and by February, Freud had diagnosed Elma with 'dementia–praecox' (now known as schizophrenia). Ferenczi had trouble believing the diagnosis but he decided that he must have 'overlooked something in the psychiatric sphere' (7.2.11, I, 253), and already believed he had failed in his analysis of Elma. His aim was to get her to reveal all her fantasies, dreams, and thoughts about Ferenczi himself and her parents. If Elma discussed an emotional wound Ferenczi tended to ignore this and instead he pushed for the information he wanted. He later said to Freud that when he approached Elma as a suitor: 'she showed me not the pure joy of a lover but rather the pain of her emotional wounds, the endurance test failed' (3.1.12, I, 325).

Freud's description of his first meeting with Elma is revealing and it becomes clear that his sympathies lie with Gizella:

> Frau G's visit was very nice; her conversation charming. Her daughter is made of coarser material, participated little, and for the most part had a blank expression on her face. Otherwise, of course, there was not the slightest abnormality noticeable in her. The scar is really inconspicuous and gives good opportunity for her undeniable vanity. You are quite right about the danger you have unearthed; it really branches out from the transference. Now the fear of the name of the illness is another such danger. Hysteria is already familiar to us as small change, dementia praecox not yet. The diagnosis says nothing about its practical significance. (8.2.11, I, 254)

Over the year of 1911, Freud became very prejudiced against Elma. He preferred Gizella and wrote her letters containing his opinions of the whole situation. He realised that Elma

was not one of his usual hysterics, such as 'Dora', and so applied the yet unknown illness of 'dementia praecox' to her, although he vaguely mention the symptoms to be of no 'practical significance'. He attributed her vanity to the scar she received while Ferenczi was helping to treat her for toothache the year before and Freud later diagnosed Elma as a narcissist. It is interesting that Freud calls hysteria 'small change'. It seems the era of the hysteric was over, and Freud was investigating and naming new illnesses in his patients.

In July 1911, Elma was again analysed by Ferenczi. Ferenczi wrote to Freud, explaining how the analysis of Elma was going. He said that she is 'consciously overcompensating; naturally I look for and find the most natural drives repressed behind this' (14.7.11, I, 296). Freud responded that because of the situation of the triadic affair the analysis would not develop: 'I fear that it will go well up to a certain point and then not at all' (20.7.11, I, 296).

In October 1911, Elma was in analysis with Ferenczi and a suitor had just shot himself. Years later, Elma would remember this as the start of her analysis, when in fact it started eight months earlier. Strangely, Ferenczi does not make much of the effect of this event on Elma's feelings, and only wants to know and analyse the thoughts that are focused on him. It is clear that, as in Bertha's case history, analysts are not grief counsellors. Meanwhile, Ferenczi tried to loosen the tie with Gizella, and recognised his 'strong interest in young, pretty creatures' (14.11.11, I, 311). He is 38 years old at this point.

The wording of Ferenczi's letters to Freud reveals where both analysts believed the blame lay for the affair. By December of 1911, Ferenczi wrote:

> Perhaps in the end my sight was clouded by passion – in any event, I can't perceive anything in Elma's character that would have ***prevented*** me inwardly from approaching her […] I have to conceive of the matter in such a way as to conclude that Elma became especially ***dangerous*** to me at the moment when – after that young man's suicide – she badly needed someone to support her and to help her in her need. (3.12.11, I, 317) (My italics)

Ferenczi did not recognise that Elma needed support and counselling. He instead inferred that *because* she needed support, she accepted it from Ferenczi when it was offered, instead of rebuffing him, which was what he thinks she should have done.

Ferenczi had compromised Elma's analysis when he first realized his feelings for her. In December 1911, he said: 'I was not able to maintain the cool detachment of the analyst with regard to Elma, and I laid myself bare, which led to a kind of closeness which I can no longer put forth as the benevolence of the physician or of the fatherly friend' (3.12.11, I, 317). Later that month, once Ferenczi had decided marriage was his only option he said: 'What is still missing is the fatherly blessing' (18.12.11, I, 321). It is not clear who the father is. Often Ferenczi refers to Freud as the father; Freud calls Ferenczi his 'Dear Son', and he did originally see Ferenczi as the man who would continue the progress he had made in psychoanalysis. Freud even harboured jealousy towards Elma and saw her as taking Ferenczi away from him: 'I am gradually getting used to the idea that you could take your summer vacation trip with her instead of me, although, if it comes to that, you certainly won't have me to thank for it. On the contrary, I will put as many difficulties in her way as possible' (13.02.12, I, 344).

Ferenczi described Elma's own father, Géza Pálos, as 'a very eccentric, self-centred person' (15.1.12, I, 327). Géza was patronised, marginalized, and not taken into too much account. Even Elma saw little strength in him or as anything of a role model and to Bálint, she wrote: 'He was a hapless, deaf and weak man' (12.11.51, Berman, 514). Yet it seems that amongst the Ferenczi/Elma/Gizella triangle, Géza was the man with sense, and both Elma and Ferenczi have different accounts of how Géza reacted to the news that they were to be married. Elma wrote to Bálint: 'Probably he clapped his hands in amazement and gave a shy laugh – the way he would always do, surrendered to his fate and retreated. That's what

he did all his life' (12.11.51, Berman, 514). There is anger and disappointment in Elma's remarks. In 1967 in an interview with Paul Roazen, Elma described her father as a 'kind soft man'. She said that early in his marriage he grew deaf, and 'could not "communicate" with people'.

Young Elma Pálos

When Ferenczi and Elma came to Géza with news of their engagement, Ferenczi said 'he made a few hesitant objections by alluding to Elma's earlier engagement, which had been called off a few years ago'.[5] Ferenczi continued: 'To my amazement, certain doubts crept

[5] Freud writes in his essay 'On Narcissism: An Introduction', (1914-16): 'The want of satisfaction which arises from the non-fulfilment of this ideal liberates homosexual libido, and this transformed into a sense of guilt

into *Elma's* mind. That made me suspicious. I inquired further and learned from her (what I should certainly have learnt in her analysis) that *every time* she wishes something especially strongly, she inwardly feels an inability to wish (as well as to hate) without reservation'. Elma had thwarted Ferenczi's attempts to discover her true feelings in analysis and these are only revealed with the help of her true father, Géza. Ferenczi realised 'that the issue here should be one not of marriage but of the treatment of illness' (1.1.12, I, 323). With the realization that Elma had kept certain thoughts from him, he made it his mission to explore her in depth, and she underwent analysis that lasted for years.

His inability to make Elma fully participate in analysis to his satisfaction meant that he felt he could not marry her. Freud acknowledged that Ferenczi had treated Elma badly, and said 'in this humour, a woman can hardly be woo'd!' (2.1.12, I, 324) On January 13th 1912, Freud, who had now taken over the analysis of Elma, included details (in a letter to Ferenczi) of his preliminary case notes:

> She is quite inhibited, obviously wants to be the good child, to please, to be treated with tenderness; fears loss of love if she admits something. Consciously she is quite well-behaved, but the ucs. portions are not coming out right. We are in the processes of raising a long buried propping by the father. She is one of those children, who, very spoiled by the father in the first few years, have felt the unavoidable loss of intimacy as neglect. It seems that all her attitudes and desires go back to this factor; hence, the yearning to show herself naked, the sexual curiosity to see something male.
>
> The breaking of the habit of masturbation in early years has already been secured, her consciousness of guilt connected with her illicitly acquired knowledge of the male genital. Hence, her having to conceal, to play a role, etc.
>
> Up until now I have found nothing that could not dissipate in the face of a fortunate reality. Certainly her love for you is based on her attitude toward her father and the competition with her mother. Her reaction to the knowledge of your relations with her mother is still completely absent and would easily establish itself in marriage as a revenge for her father.
>
> It's nice that she has an inclination to forget and to confuse the words for east and west in all languages except Hungarian. Her second language was French: le lever et le coucher du soleil. The sun is naturally her father, who probably took her to bed with

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(social anxiety). Originally this sense of guilt was a fear of punishment by the parents or, more correctly, the fear of losing their love; later the parents are replaced by an indefinite number of fellow-men'.

> him in the morning, and then got up in front of her, and with whom she would like to go to bed at night.
>
> She falls in love compulsively with doctors, i.e. with persons who see her naked, physically and now mentally.

This portrays a very prurient view of Elma and her relationship with her father. As a typical Freudian case study, it is neither out of the ordinary nor very exciting and would probably be applied to most women who came to seek his help at this time. However, it also invites questions about Elma's father, and her reasons for her relationship with Ferenczi. Freud's assertion that Elma illicitly acquired knowledge of the male genitalia implies a dark secret between Elma and her father.[6] Freud's explanation of Elma's silence, which he simply saw as the bearing of the guilt of this knowledge, ignores the basic facts: that his own efforts to exhort a narrative of imagined or real trauma could have been damaging and painful to Elma and so she shuts him out.

His attitude to the language problems Elma experienced is interesting. Elma's confusion of east and west suggests an unclear state of mind, and problems with language are common for hysterical patients. Many could not utter more than a few words, or put a sentence together. The aphrasia, (the inability to speak connected phrases) or aphemia, (inability to utter words) were prevalent in Europe amongst women in the early twentieth century, and many came to Freud in the hope he would cure their disability.[7] Apart from this brief acknowledgment of Elma's problem with these two words, he did not interpret them. My own interpretation is geographical. A few of Freud's early female patients are known to have emigrated to America, sailing west to free themselves from the constraints of their own

[6] Freud had by this point long abandoned his 'seduction theory', believing instead that the 'memories' of abuse that his patients would discuss were dreams and yearnings for a sexual attachment to the father. Thus, as Jeffrey Masson suggests, Freud ignored tales of real abuse and could be seen to have failed the women who sought his help.

[7] Examples of women with speech difficulties are the case of Anna O and 'Dora'.

psyche. They saw the west as a place of freedom away from old Eastern Europe and the analysts who wanted to open their minds.

In January 1912, while she was in analysis with Freud, Ferenczi said: 'The reports about Elma actually don't surprise me. I feel that I have seen, in part, ***almost*** everything that you tell me about her and have in part had vague intimations about it but (probably in order to be able to keep her with me) have not been able to admit it to myself clearly and analytically and didn't want to have her confess it to me'. He recounted a scene with Elma, before her analysis with Freud: 'About what you call peccadilloes, I have often posed direct questions to her without having received proper answers. She brought me, among other things, a dream in which that dentist embraces her' (perhaps Ferenczi forgets that he once acted as a dentist to her), that 'she acts as if she were shocked by it, even though she wasn't' (20.1.12, I, 331). Ferenczi enjoyed making her talk especially about her sexual dreams and thoughts. Although the Freudian technique is to decipher these sexual thoughts and dreams, Ferenczi seemed rather to gain personal pleasure through Elma's analysis. In the same letter, he wrote:

> My therapeutic plan with Elma was such that I would counter her coquetry with polite refusal and in that way force her to come out with her true affects. In this stage of the treatment the misfortune occurred that the reins of my self-control fell out of my hands.

The sexual indiscretions committed by Ferenczi were admitted to Freud, who did not censure Ferenczi on his breach of the doctor/patient relationship.

At the same time as Ferenczi was unable to restrain himself from physical contact with Elma, he did not wish to marry her until she has been fully treated and 'improved'. For Ferenczi, it seemed that to be cured Elma had to commit to analytic openness. Freud was quick to catch on to her lack of response. He wrote to Ferenczi of Elma's progress which

had reached a peak: 'But resistance is already shimmering through: It says: Just get out of the treatment as soon as possible' (23.1.12, I, 333). A few days later Freud writes: 'With Elma, something is, in fact, happening. We are getting further, are succeeding in penetrating and breaking through the father identification, which, in the form of prudery, was the main obstacle to the work and also constitutes a large portion of the manifest narcissism' (1.2.12, I, 339). It is interesting how the words 'penetrating' and 'breaking' have their own sexual connotations, and this is how I see the analysis being played out. Later that month Freud again used sexually loaded language: 'I knew about the letter to you. It is entirely dictated by the same desire for revenge, over which a thick veil is naturally still lying, as is the case with everything that comes up. I am making an effort to tear it' (20.2.12, I, 348).

By March 8th 1912, Ferenczi had decided to end his engagement to Elma. Freud began to see her silence as part of the illness. Her attitude had also changed. She was actively staying silent, building up resistance to his methods and as he notices himself, building up emotion against him: 'Today I was tough, and she went away with a very angry expression on her face' (20.2.1912, I, 349). In a later letter, he wrote: 'We are really in the narcissistic stage in which she behaves very self-sufficiently and actually refuses help. She is now herself, and I am curious how far I can bring her in these four weeks. She no longer plays the part of the good patient at all' (13.3.1912, I, 356). Over the course of the next few months, Elma was released from Freud's analysis and sent back to Ferenczi. Ferenczi mentioned that he tried to be cordial to her, but that she reacted angrily.

By April 23rd, 1912, it seemed that despite Elma's protests about the triadic living situation, Ferenczi was very pleased, and saw the affair as working out: 'I am spending my evenings with Frau G. and Elma and am attempting to live together experimentally, in a threesome, as it were. Elma is showing me her newly acquired mastery in the art of cooking

and is using every opportunity that comes along to be tender towards me' (23.4.12, I, 368). Elma's transformation from neurotic fragile woman to apparent housewife is a complete role reversal. It did not last long. Elma and Gizella were in a competition. Ferenczi admired Gizella's insight and interest in his work and theories, and he realized he needed this aspect in a partner. Elma, on the other hand, seemed bored by the scientific talk and kept away from their discussions, rejecting the psychoanalytical language. Ferenczi, (still not having discounted marriage to Elma despite his previous decision) now saw marriage to Elma as a marriage of convenience, and therefore Elma now had the diminished role of baby-maker, while Gizella fulfilled his intellectual needs.

The analysis with Ferenczi meanwhile continued and Elma became increasingly more inhibited and silent. On April 25th 1912, Ferenczi wrote: 'She has to decide to speak with me freely and uninhibitedly, to admit her resistances. If she doesn't do that, then I am firmly resolved finally to give her up' (25.4.12, I, 369). He admitted that Elma 'was beginning to lose patience; I told her that nothing could be changed in the method; *c'est à prendre ou à laisser* [take it or leave it]…she, incidentally, expresses herself only at times, especially when I have to hurt her and bring her to tears' (25.4.12, I, 392). These sadistic methods are not known, and it seems Elma's resolve to keep her privacy would not be broken except under duress.

Towards the end of 1912, Elma's name appears infrequently in the correspondence between Freud and Ferenczi. She had left the family house, and intended to marry an industrialist called Gratz. Both Freud and Ferenczi were happy and relieved that she had decided to get married. Ferenczi even told Freud to persuade Elma, who visited Freud in Vienna, that marriage was the right thing. Ferenczi has acknowledged that analytical relationships are just that, and are always at the mercy of the analysis. Psychoanalysis is

something that appears to be unbending and fixed. It is masculine and scientific in its impressions and its cure, and Ferenczi realised that it also controls the analyst. His recognition of this fact meant he realised that these three years of a broken love affair between two women were the result of analysis, and he had been its victim, as had Elma and Frau G.

Chapter Eight The Story of the Story

The Fragmented Voice

On January 28th 1912, Ferenczi told Freud that his marriage to Elma was dependent on the successful outcome of the analysis (more precisely, that she reveal everything to them). Ferenczi committed one of his many indiscretions and transcribed a letter for Freud, written by Elma to Ferenczi and Gizella in secret, in Hungarian, and then translated back for Freud in German. At the same time as Ferenczi was covertly revealing Elma's thoughts to Freud, he was also in control of them, through his own translation and interruptions. Elma wrote:

> "Mama's letter to me would have been sufficient; it was superfluous for Sándor to write to Freud immediately. Prof. Freud declared, to my regret, that he would rather I didn't tell anyone at all about the analyses."
> [She promises to be obedient in this as well, in order to further the cure; she is already very impatient – especially since the last hour was "bad" and she was not able to talk at all.]
> She wants to know *positively* what you have written to me about her, whether you are satisfied with her progress. [Frau G. responded to her in a reassuring manner.]
>
> My character is so unbalanced, such a terrible chaos is reigning in me that it would be a risk for anyone to take me as a wife. Even if the analysis clarifies the situation, I will still be the same old way and the bad things can begin again at any occasion. The only possibility to live will be by avoiding such occasions. Sándor can have neither the desire nor the patience to take me by the hand every step of the way [literally: "lead me every step of the way"] – …I fear I will only create worry for everyone who takes me"…
> [There follow a few lines about the hope that it will turn out well.] Then: Dear Mama, you never write about yourself. If you have reached an agreement with Sándor that you cannot live without each other, then write me that honestly. (18.1.12, I, 329)

Already, as the beginning of the letter suggests, Freud wants to make sure she does not repeat details of her analysis to anyone, but no doubt, Freud will reveal all the details to Ferenczi. There is the sense that Ferenczi's interruptions plague her letter. They interrupt

the flow of her writing making it fragmented and stilted. He attempts to explain what she must be thinking, and thus takes her authorship out of her hands and places it into his own.

On February 18th 1912, Ferenczi again transcribes one of Elma's letters for Freud:

> "I know that you wish only the best for me…and would gladly give me the tenderness I need" –[She inserts parenthetically here that she erroneously wanted to write "weakness" here in place of the word "tenderness," which is formed in Hungarian from the stem "weak." (From that I conclude that it matters to her mainly to see me as weak and to triumph over me.)]

Again, Ferenczi cuts up the flow of the letter with his inserts and asides. The focus is in her difficulty with finding expression through Hungarian, her first language. Ferenczi sees her initial mistake to want to write 'weakness' instead of 'tenderness' as seeing him as weak, although there is the possibility that the sentence reads as if Ferenczi 'would gladly *give me* the (weakness) I need'. Her subconscious thought might be that Ferenczi's analysis of her and their relationship is anything but tender, but in fact makes her weak. It is clear that he has chosen to transcribe only the parts of the letter that he feels are important to Freud and her analysis. Thus, the letter does not make complete sense, and the flow is interrupted and fragmented.

Freud's vision of what she says is clouded by Ferenczi's own observations:

> "I fear that I will never learn to bear sacrifice and deprivation without bitterness."
> (*That* prospect is certainly not enticing.)
> After she praised you and the analysis, she says that she hopes the analysis won't examine the deepest layers in her, which is due to the weakness of her intellectual abilities.
> She then writes (as if she wanted to condemn you) that you don't tell her anymore about the analysis than is necessary to explain *her* case. I think that behind this is the wish to be treated by you as she once was by me. At the same time, fantasies of being equal to you (wish to be a man, a scholar).
> "I learn about the science of analysis only things that have to do with me; however interesting that may be – new perspectives aren't opened up by it."
> "It appears to me as if we are going round in circles and are not making any progress now."
> "I am not talking out of dissatisfaction; I only want to talk truthfully about my feelings."

Ferenczi was tied to Gizella because he appreciated her intellect, which is apparently superior to Elma's, and thus he can discuss his theories on equal terms with Gizella. He thinks Elma has no interest in psychoanalysis, but this letter reveals her wish to learn more and the frustration of having limited information.

> "Many sensations in me have certainly not yet been explained, ***and I also don't have the courage necessary for the truth***." (Evidently she is still withholding some of her associations.)
> "I am no longer 'ill' – but I am still living too much in fantasies and exaggerations, so I can't go home."
> In conclusion: "I kiss you and Mama with much love," and the remark: "With this last sentence I had to think for a long time how one writes it correctly in Hungarian." (Certainly her doubt about the reality of these "many loves" is being expressed in this grammatical uncertainty.) (18.2.12, I, 345)

Elma is still being analysed by Freud in Vienna at his point. Ferenczi has highlighted in italics Elma's lines conveying her lack of courage for hearing the truth, and he sees this as her withholding of information. However, it could be that she does not want to hear the truth of her own diagnosis and she lacks the courage to hear what Freud may say about her. The letter has been fragmented and dissected to the extent that the meaning has become unclear. Ferenczi's interruptions change the whole meaning, which at the very least, become ambiguous.

In April, Ferenczi tells Freud:

> On the following evenings I was constantly in the company of both of them and was striving to establish the basis for a comfortable and harmonious life together. But Elma seemed inhibited; her inhibition grew even stronger, and yesterday she admitted to me that this situation is disagreeable to her. She was already impatient to enjoy life finally and can adapt herself only with difficulty to waiting until I make up my mind, and to suspending her wishes in the meantime (she didn't say this with these words, but the sense of her intimations could not be misunderstood). (17.4.1912, I, 364).

To Freud, Ferenczi relates Elma's admissions in his own words and it is not clear if Elma has actually said this. Freud and Ferenczi have already used her letters to analyse her.

Ferenczi speaks *for* Elma and analyses the words he has said for her. Elma has no control over the narrative in her analysis with Freud because it has been compromised by Ferenczi's interruptions and opinions.

In an undated letter to Freud in the summer of 1912, Ferenczi again transcribes a letter from Elma:

> "Tuesday night. I promise you, Sándor that I won't write to you anymore, not even on Sundays [allusion], never. Only today do I still want to speak to you. I understand completely that it has come to this. I am writing you today because I feel that I will no longer be as close to you as I am today, and out of this closeness I would like to tell you what I am feeling. I don't know what my feelings mean. You probably know it better than I, and that is why you wanted us to part. I know quite certainly that you will not come to get me. And yet I have such a terrible anxiety about it. This being alone that now awaits me will be stronger than I; I feel almost as if everything will freeze inside me. I will remain reasonable, but it will be so cold in me, I will freeze so much that I will also have to hate this last refuge, reason.

Despite Elma's lack of interest in psychoanalysis, she is aware that Ferenczi does know what goes on inside her mind. Her emotional letter is very honest and yet she knows that it is her honesty that Ferenczi finds lacking. The feelings Ferenczi thinks she is unable to possess are expressed here; her insights into Ferenczi's own psychology are also present and act as a disturbing rebuttal.

> "I am considering the following: if you were sure of yourself and myself, you would not have done what you did now. Therefore you want something to change in yourself, or in me. Isn't that right? So, things are not good the way they are. You want to wait until something changes in us. Perhaps you even prefer that I forget you (even if you love me); you would perhaps rather suffer a little than warm up to the idea that we should stay together. You are so very right! It would be a pity for your life and your future if all your hopes were not fulfilled. You know me, of course, and you know that there is no relying on me. I even think a little bit that you would perhaps not be sorry if I estranged myself from you spiritually; that would be a kind of relief for you. Or maybe not? Perhaps you will be able to forget me without pangs of consciousness – as soon as I am no longer suffering?! Or did you push through the divorce because you still love mother, very much, in fact, and suddenly you can't do without her? Believe me; if it were only a matter of me and not just of you and Mother, I wouldn't be able to bear it.
>
> I also feel really a little like your child, so much do I wish to be led by you.

Elma's tone in this letter is confusing. At some points, it is controlled, forthright, and commanding, and she sees beneath Ferenczi's motives: how he uses these two women to discover his own thought processes, and how he relishes suffering himself. Elma seems to be stuck between knowing and all seeing and therefore in control, and giving in to the emotions Ferenczi unleashes in her. The fragility of her psyche is revealed. Ferenczi is fifteen years older than Elma and the relationship that has emerged out of the analysis and the affair, is that of father and daughter, as Elma makes clear when she says 'I feel really a little like your child'.

> "Perhaps, far away from you, I will gain the self-sufficiency that I lost completely with respect to you but can't do without at all. What do you think, will it be good if I now consciously settle accounts with every little thing, take care of everything – and in the meantime the greatest part of my devotion crumbles – which is the main thing anyway? Or can both tendencies be brought into harmony?
>
> "Talk about yourself, for once; up to now you have been talking only about me! [Now comes the story that Elma had a talk with her mother. This arouses her conscience, and she asks me to leave her be and return to her mother, who shouldn't be condemned to staying with her father for the rest of her life]

This is Ferenczi's transcription and it is interesting to note that upon the most important topic Elma mentions in this letter, that of the damaging effects of the affair, Ferenczi glosses over. He only transcribes the sentences about him.

> "Look Sándor – there's no harm done to me; I will go to Rome [to her aunts] or to Liebautal [to her previous fiancé] – or wherever; you will marry Mother, forget this episode in your life, and you will live whole and without regret. I don't believe mother when she says you don't love her anymore.
> "Write to me once, one single time, honestly, the way one speaks to an adult, and tell me what you really feel. You'll do that, won't you; then I will be able to live much more in peace. I always want to be with Mother. All inhibition between us must disappear. I want to learn how to speak for her sake – she has no one but me. Unfortunately, with talk one can mitigate only feelings, not facts.
> "I don't want to write any empty phrases at the end. I only want to say to you that I pity you if you are suffering. You are suffering because of desolation and because of Mother – and not because of me. Isn't that right?
> "Tell me: do you think that I could ever bring you happiness?

> "Is it so terrible to take leave of you now. I won't write to you anymore, since I know that you don't want me to?
> "Reply today. Write about yourself.
> "And I thank you for everything; I often cannot talk because I have the feeling that I am living in you; everything that I am revolves around you." (Undated, summer 1912, I, 382)

It is noticeable that despite what must be a confusing and harrowing relationship between Elma and her mother, Gizella is the only person Elma wants to get better for ('I want to learn how to speak for her sake'). Elma's letter proves that she is open and honest. In a break with convention that maintains that the end of a letter usually puts forward a testimony of love, she says she does 'not want to write empty phrases'. Instead, she reveals that she pities him. This is an extraordinary letter for one who has been played with and abused for three years. This last part in her letter is also contradictory, something which is noticeable in Elma's later letters and in interviews. She wants to be with her mother, but recognizes her mother will be with Ferenczi, and therefore she will still be around him, something she does not want at this time.

At this stage, it seems Elma is desperate to talk, to discuss the situation and resolve it, but she also realises the limitations of speech. Elma and Ferenczi have different ideas of honesty and openness. Ferenczi is confined by Freud's analytic technique and his own feelings of inadequacy, thus he repeatedly tries to break Elma down.

The Mother as Martyr

Throughout the triadic relationship, the correspondence between Freud and Ferenczi seems to marginalise the effect Gizella has on Elma's feelings and ability to speak. However, there are allusions to episodes where it appears that Gizella did play a big role in hurting Elma. It becomes clear that after Ferenczi and Elma have decided that it would be better for

them to part, Gizella persists in encouraging both Ferenczi and Elma to remain together. The result is that Elma never fully separates herself from the triangle, and has to seek psychiatric treatment elsewhere.

In a letter to Gizella that Freud wanted to keep secret from Ferenczi, Freud explained to her his thoughts on Ferenczi's wavering between Gizella and Elma, and that he doubted whether Elma could live up to Gizella's role as a suitable wife for Ferenczi (17.12.11, I, 319). Freud's letter is as sympathetic and sensitive to Gizella's suffering, as it is at the same time blunt and often patronising. This is a stark insight into Gizella's own concerns, if we are to believe Freud. He said that the letter should remain secret and that until he met Gizella and grew to esteem her he objected to the relationship (presumably, because she was already married).

Gizella and Ferenczi

He continues: 'You have shown me this daughter. I did not find that she could place herself alongside her mother, and I remember the quiet intimations with which you endorsed my concerns.' He implies that Gizella has acknowledged her own doubts about Elma's

capacity to love Ferenczi. It is also a little strange that throughout the letter, Freud does not refer to Elma by name. He refers to her as 'the girl' or the 'daughter' and therefore distanced from Freud, who has taken a dislike to her.

> But the girl should not have been allowed to show so clearly that she wants to repress her mother just as she did when she was a child, and that she wishes nothing but this.
>
> The main difficulty is this: Does one want to build this alliance for life on concealing the fact that the man has been her mother's lover in the fullest sense of the word? And can one rely on that fact that she will take it well and overcome it in a superior manner when she knows it? That requires a high degree of mental freedom, not a piece of infantilism; in short, she would have to be more like her mother and not have betrayed that strange inclination to flee into illness.

Elma's 'inclination to flee into illness' is later noted in a letter from Ferenczi to Georg Groddeck, who treated Elma for some time in the 1920s. In 1923, some time after Elma's marriage had failed, she moved back to Hungary and in with Gizella and Ferenczi. Ferenczi wrote that: 'Elma is somewhat bored, and consoles herself with occasional stomach pains' (9.6.23, 49). The tendency to descend into illness could be a manifestation of the intolerable living situation that Elma found herself in. As shown in the case of 'Dora', difficult domestic conditions resulting in mental trauma often manifest themselves into physical symptoms: being unable to walk, leg pains, and language difficulties. Ferenczi had recognised this, thus, must have been aware of the dreadful unhappiness he had imposed upon her.

Throughout the Ferenczi 'affair' details of Elma's personal life are limited. It seems that he is the focus and problem, and Gizella is in the background. However, one scene with an ex-fiancé is revealing about the relationship between Elma and her mother. In 1911, Ferenczi wrote to Freud who was analysing Lorschy, a fiancé of Elma's, and asked on behalf of Gizella for details surrounding Lorschy's analysis. As with Bertha's mother who 'spied' on and almost controlled Bertha, Gizella is also spying on Elma. Ferenczi was

aware of his feelings for Elma at this point, but Gizella required the information, either for the protection of her daughter or control:

> Frau G sends thanks for your greeting. She requests some confidential information from you. A young man by the name of *Lorschy* made an appointment to see you some time ago (March?); a philologist, whom you will probably recognise from his peculiarly halting manner of speech…He is the "first case" of Frau G.'s daughter – Elma. Now Frau G. would like to know what kind of impression he made on you. (11.5.11, I, 275)

Freud responds that he cannot remember Lorschy. This endeavour to delve into Elma's romantic life is an effort to control any life Elma has on her own. Gizella violates the confidence of the analysis. This bold step shows how close a watch Gizella kept on her daughter, even though Elma was twenty-four.

Gizella's control of her daughter extends to Elma's relationship with Ferenczi. From Elma's letters to both Gizella and Ferenczi it is clear that half way through her analysis with Freud in 1912, Elma had decided that leaving Ferenczi was best for her. Despite Gizella's long relationship with Ferenczi, there are many times in the correspondence where Ferenczi tells Freud that Gizella wishes for him to be with Elma. At the end of 1911, Ferenczi writes to Freud that his decision to marry Elma 'is made only possible through the incomparable love and kindness of Frau G., who has recovered from the heavy blow and has joyfully placed herself in the service of our happiness' (30.12.11, I, 323).

In 1913, despite Elma's wishes that they separate, (although Ferenczi still wavers) Ferenczi wrote to Freud: 'Meanwhile, Frau G. is tirelessly championing Elma's cause with me; she sees in it the only possible and – as she says – favourable solution for all of us' (7.7.13, I, 497). Gizella tries to keep the triadic relationship together despite Elma's attempts to escape. In this way, Gizella appeared to have formed a masochistic attachment to the triangle, and she would not let it disintegrate.

In 1914, Elma married Johann Nilsen Laurvik, an art critic and journalist based in New Jersey. When he married Elma, he was working for the San Francisco Art Exposition to be held the following year. They travelled there together, collecting art in Hungary and other Eastern European countries. In an affidavit signed in 1957, Elma described him as of 'unstable character' (Berman, 508), and a family member described him as violent towards her. They parted and she returned home, never officially divorcing. She said in a letter to Michael Bálint in 1966: 'The transitory nature of feelings was the greatest disappointment of my life. The one I could love was my husband, but he was a Peer Gynt and our life dissolved' (Berman, 515). Berman reads Elma's statement as evidence of her own 'transitory feelings' but by Ferenczi's own admission to Freud, he was divided between Gizella and Elma for almost twenty years, and it may have been this that was Elma's greatest disappointment.

In 1916, Ferenczi revealed to Freud that he had accused Gizella of 'neurotic pampering – almost worshipping – of Elma'. Ferenczi had given Gizella an ultimatum: 'finally to choose between me and Elma' (23.10.16, II, 148). The evidence suggests that Gizella tried to control Elma's life to a destructive degree.

Elma and Laurvik

The Georg Groddeck and Ferenczi correspondence is rich in information about Elma's case during the 1920s. In Baden-Baden, Groddeck had created a sanatorium using the methods of healthy eating, rest and exercise to counter any mental imbalance. Ferenczi and Freud visited and partook in the treatment regularly, but it seemed Elma had the most benefit and most importantly, she was away from her mother and Ferenczi.

Ferenczi wrote to Groddeck, on behalf of Elma, about the possibility of Elma receiving treatment from him. At the bottom of the letter, intriguingly, Gizella writes: 'I can hardly wait for Elma to be with you, as I am convinced you will become very close' (8.5.22, 25). Now that Elma is separated from Laurvik and therefore single again, Gizella's previous

knowledge of Elma's analysis suggests she may be palming Elma off on Groddeck. Gizella understood, just as Henry James did, the dynamics of the analytical relationship.

Elma signed into Baden-Baden on the 31st July 1922, and departed 17th September. The home situation appearing to be intolerable, she again signed in on the 30th September and left on the 15th December. The following February, in a letter from Ferenczi to Groddeck, Elma had enquired when the facility opened again for the year. Elma remained in contact with Groddeck, visiting his sanatorium often. The analysis that started in 1910, had led to years of future analysis and mental instability.

In 1927, Frédéric Kovács was staying at Georg Groddeck's sanatorium as a patient. He wrote letters to his wife Vilma, a student of Ferenczi's, and told her that Gizella still wished Ferenczi to marry Elma, despite Gizella and Ferenczi having married in 1919:

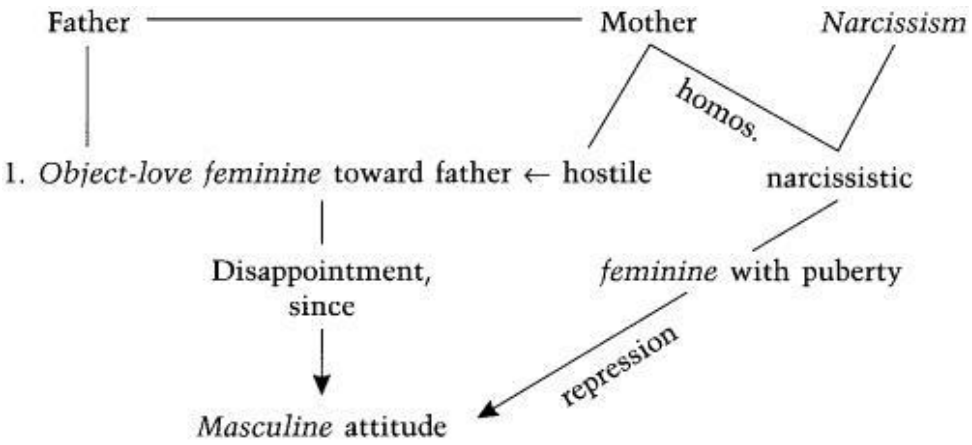
> Imagine, my little darling, what Groddeck told me yesterday when he made his regular visit to me: Ferenczi loved Gizella first, then he got engaged to Elma; but the engagement was broken off, and she got married in America, and it was then that Ferenczi married Gizella. What do you say to that? What's more, Gizella's dearest wish, at present, and her plan, is that Sándor should divorce her and marry Elma – she would not give him up for any other woman, only for Elma – and she would content herself with playing the role of mother. (Fortune, 8.1.27, 120)

For almost twenty years, Gizella had been trying to preserve a relationship between Elma and Ferenczi that had long since dissolved. The continued involvement of Ferenczi in Elma's life damages her. Frédéric continues to comment on Elma, who was staying in Baden-Baden as a patient:

> After all, Gizella is in her 62nd year and Elma is only just over 40; that's why Elma went from Paris to Berlin to see Groddeck – who was there for a round of lectures – because she was very depressed. According to Frau Groddeck, Elma 'war nahe am Erlöschen', [close to dying] so great were – that is to say, are – her conflicts; Groddeck got her back on her feet to a certain extent, and Elma decided either to move to Berlin or perhaps to take a separate flat in Budapest, but not to stay any more in the shared flat.

Even in 1927, seventeen years after Elma first entered analysis she was still suffering from the damaging triadic affair, and had finally made the decision to leave the shared house.

Freud was right, that given the situation of the triadic relationship, the analysis could not progress. It is interesting to note, that in his letters to Ferenczi, he pointed towards the mother as having an effect on the daughter, Elma, and as being the cause of repression. He includes a diagram to illustrate his theory:



He wrote that Elma had been: 'Speaking and also behaving differently…This probably originated during puberty and is connected with the image of her mother; it is genuinely feminine' (3.3.12, I, 351). He continues: 'We will come back to this'. He was on the verge of his own reading of the triadic relationship but he does not come back to this theory in the correspondence. He missed a turning point in Elma's analysis that could have meant an earlier recovery.

The Story of the Story

Out of the 'Elma affair', as with Bertha's story, a myth has emerged. The problematic publication of Ferenczi's work and the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence has involved secrecy, censorship, and misinterpretation, further fragmenting the already complicated story.

Ferenczi dedicated much of his later work, until his death in 1933, to the problems of the analytic setting. He attempted to define the obligations of the analyst to the patient. Ferenczi's most important essay: 'The Confusion of Tongues between Adults and the Child' (1932), seems to have emerged from his experiences with Elma, despite her being in her twenties and therefore not a child. His original title for this essay was: 'The Passions of Adults and their Influence on the Sexual and Character Development of Children'. This is in complete opposition to Freud's theories. Despite the change of title, the argument reveals Ferenczi's disagreement with Freud's decision to move away from the seduction theory. Ferenczi writes:

> If the shocks increase in number during the development of the child, the number and the various kinds of splits in the personality increase too, and soon it becomes extremely difficult to maintain contact without confusion with all the fragments, each of which behaves as a separate personality yet does not know of even the existence of the others. Eventually it may arrive at a state which – continuing the picture of ***fragmentation*** – one would be justified in calling ***atomization***. (Ferenczi, 1932, 165)

His language in these essays is markedly different from that of his earlier works, and is very sympathetic; he concentrates solely on the patient and the effects of sexual abuse. Ferenczi recognised that he needed to listen to his patients, and rather than see their silence as resistance, he saw it as a criticism of his analytical methods:

> I started to listen to my patients when, in their attacks, they called me insensitive, cold, even hard and cruel, when they reproached me with being selfish, heartless, conceited […] Then I began to test my conscience in order to discover whether, despite all my

> conscious good intentions, there might after all be some truth in these accusations. I wish to add that such periods of anger and hatred occurred only exceptionally; very often the sessions ended with a striking, almost helpless compliance and willingness to accept my interpretations […] When, in addition to the strain caused by this analytical situation, we imposed on the patient the further burden of reproducing the original trauma, we created a situation that was indeed unbearable. Small wonder that our effort produced no better results than the original trauma. (Ferenczi, 1932, 157)

Ferenczi was the first to label the 'Identification with the aggressor' theory. He wrote a clinical diary between July and October 1932, which he never dared show to Freud or the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society. He recorded his thoughts and theories on the sexual abuse of children and the resulting personality defects in adults. By devoting his later work to these problems, which are in direct contrast to Freud's, who we know refused to persevere with the 'seduction theory', Ferenczi sacrificed his good name and career. Some of his work was repressed for fifty-three years, and he was cast out of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society for his views. Berman says 'we never hear directly from him regret or guilt about his tantalising attitude towards Elma, so strongly influenced by his surrender to Freud's view' (Berman, 500). Nevertheless, these later papers, which effectively signed his death warrant as part of the psychoanalytic circles, do seem to contain apologetic material and insight into what he has done. This is Ferenczi's atonement.

The recognition of past mistakes cannot make up for past moral ambiguity. Ferenczi's sexual desires ruined the lives of not only Gizella and Elma, but he admits to trysts with Gizella's sister Saroltá:

> Yesterday I was with G. Not alone, to be sure; Saroltá was with us. Yesterday afternoon –before receiving your letter – Saroltá visited me in the matter of a theatre ticket. I couldn't resist having my way with her, at least manually. But something or other (I used odour as a pretext)…restrained me from going further. That is typical with me. That's the way my actual neurosis before the trip to Rome began. I permitted myself intercourse with a prostitute – then with Sarolta –, the syphilophobia came as a punishment. (18.11.16, II, 155)

When Elma moves to America, part of the reason is to care for her Aunt Elise, another sister of Gizella's, who gets 'entirely confused and I am sorry to say, also very vicious and unpleasant…she often mentions Sándor in her phantasies' (Elma to Bálint, Berman, 11.8.56, 511). Ferenczi seems to have affected Gizella's whole family, to the point where even after his death he still haunts their lives.

Elma was left in control of all Ferenczi's essays and letters, and could decide what to publish, and what to repress. The details of the publication of ***The Freud – Ferenczi Correspondence*** are revealed in letters between Elma and Michael Bálint, much of which are now kept in the Bálint Archive, at the University of Essex. She tells Bálint: 'It's sad that if poor Sándor hadn't been taken so quickly by the hands of cruel fate then he would not be forgotten so quickly by the scientific world' (8.12.53). Freud supporters purposely ignored Ferenczi's work. In the correspondence was the awkward issue of the triadic relationship, which Bálint, Anna Freud, and Ernest Jones knew was a main theme. In the interests of protecting the people discussed, (and concealing Freud's knowledge of this affair) they delayed publication. In the same letter to Bálint, Elma comments on the delay and censoring of the letters: 'As I see it, this won't be happening soon – if ever – as Anna and Jones want to discard all the personal topics – in most cases, this is understandable – and so what remains probably won't be enough for a new volume'. In 1966, Bálint hesitantly asked Elma for her blessing on publishing the correspondence, telling her about the part she plays in it. She replied: 'I would like you to leave out my unfortunate role […] however […] aiming at historical truthfulness, it is out of the question' (Berman, 514).

In correspondence with Ernest Jones, Bálint tells Jones (19.12.57) that Elma is unaware of her role in the Freud-Ferenczi letters. Yet she says in her letter of the 8th December 1953, that she hopes: 'Contribution, [***Final Contributions***] will be successfully morally and

financially'. Therefore, there is the possibility that despite her previous lack of interest in psychoanalysis and in Ferenczi's work, she is aware of the contents of Ferenczi's later essays. These essays particularly were to be at the centre of Harold Blum's theory that a 'conspiracy of silence' repressed Ferenczi's work.[1] The published correspondence between Freud and Ferenczi reveals part of Elma's story, and she makes sure his essays were also published, possibly counterbalancing the effects of analytic abuse revealed in the letters.

Older Elma

Despite the monstrous portrayal of Ferenczi in his letters to Freud, his female patients looked upon him with affection. In the correspondence between Michael Bálint and Ernest Jones, also in the Bálint archive, Bálint defends Ferenczi's reputation and mental stability against Jones's biographical jibes. Jones had written in his third volume of his biography of

[1] Harold Blum, 'The Confusion of Tongues and Psychic Trauma' in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 71 (1994), 871.

Freud that Ferenczi was deluded, paranoid, and homicidal in the last few days of his life. Bálint had been petitioned by friends of Ferenczi to sort out the 'disagreement'. Bálint proposed writing a letter to the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* with his own point of view of Ferenczi's condition. The content of the letter was discussed and Jones and Bálint argued back and forth with Jones trying to persuade Bálint to agree with his opinion: 'You could say…from what you know of Dr. Jones you are sure he would not have made such statements without having good evidence for them' (29.11.57).

Bálint drafted a letter for the 'Journal', which Jones corrected, believing that his own opinion of Ferenczi was right. Bálint then told Jones that Elma wanted a 'rectification by you' (12.12.57) and Bálint re-drafted the letter accordingly. Despite the eventual agreement on the wording of the letter, Jones says he owes it to himself to send a riposte intimating that his remarks were based on evidence from an unnamed witness. Here, Bálint plays his trump card. Despite the disastrous analysis of Elma by Ferenczi, he did have many other female patients who thought they were cured and who admired him. Bálint said:

> Of course, I have absolutely no objections against you sending your riposte to Dr. Hoffer. In fact I find it excellent and admirable. The only thing I wish to say is that you should consider whether it is worth while having the second paragraph of your letter printed [concerning the eye witness]. My reason is this. Several people, among them Clara Thompson, Alice Lowell, Izette de Forest, and so on, have already written to me strongly criticising your description. If you now state that your description is based on evidence of an eye witness I am afraid all of them will come forward with their testimony, perhaps even challenging the trustworthiness of your witness. (30.12.57)

These 'American women', as Jones calls them, (1.1.58) are the return of the repressed. Bálint intimates that they will speak up in favour of Ferenczi who, in later life, did change his analytic technique to the benefit of his many patients. Bálint seems to leave the truth in their hands, for his letter to the *Journal* ends with: 'I would like to propose that for the time

being we record our disagreement and entrust the next generation with the task of sorting out the truth'.[2]

Elma travelled to America in 1955 and lived in the apartment she inherited from Laurvik, in New York, until the end of her life. She lived with her sister and worked at the Bela Bartok Archives, translating many of his essays. The effect of her earlier life, and the analysis, greatly affected how she later perceived herself. In a letter to Bálint she writes 'May I give you a warm hug at this occasion (you are safe from the distance)' (Berman, 516). She seems to feel she is still the tempting demon Freud thought her to be.

Despite her inability to 'speak' during the analytical years, together with the fragmenting effect Ferenczi, Gizella and Freud had on her, she now has the power to give Ferenczi a voice, and in doing so give a voice to her own story.

However, despite the publication of the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence and Ferenczi's essays, critical interest has continued to fracture Elma's narrative. By misrepresenting the facts through mistakes, a false narrative emerges. Throughout the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence, neither analyst calls Elma's husband by his name. Instead, they always called him the 'Swedish-American writer' or the 'journalist' (7.7.13, I, 497). In the footnotes in the first volume of the correspondence, the information given by the editors is that his name is Herve Laurvik, when actually it was Johann Nilsen Laurvik. Similarly, in Robert Polhemus's critical text on biblical father/daughter relationships, *Lot's Daughters*, a footnote says 'the talented analyst Sándor Ferenczi, Freud's brilliant disciple, treated Ella, the daughter of his mistress Frau G., and then married the girl' (413). Apart from the misspelling of her name, he gets the crucial fact, that Ferenczi married Elma, wrong. He married Gizella in 1919 and this information was available in the letters when this author

[2] Bálint, M., 'Sándor Ferenczi's Last Years', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 39 (1958) p. 68.

published his book. These may be small inconsequential mistakes in footnotes, but as Anthony Grafton in his entertaining book on the history of the footnote says, footnotes are the 'humanist's rough equivalent of the scientists report on data: they offer the empirical support for stories told and arguments presented' (vii). If the facts are incorrectly presented in the text, the footnote should offer impeccably researched material or explanation, and here it does not. A myth has emerged out of her story.

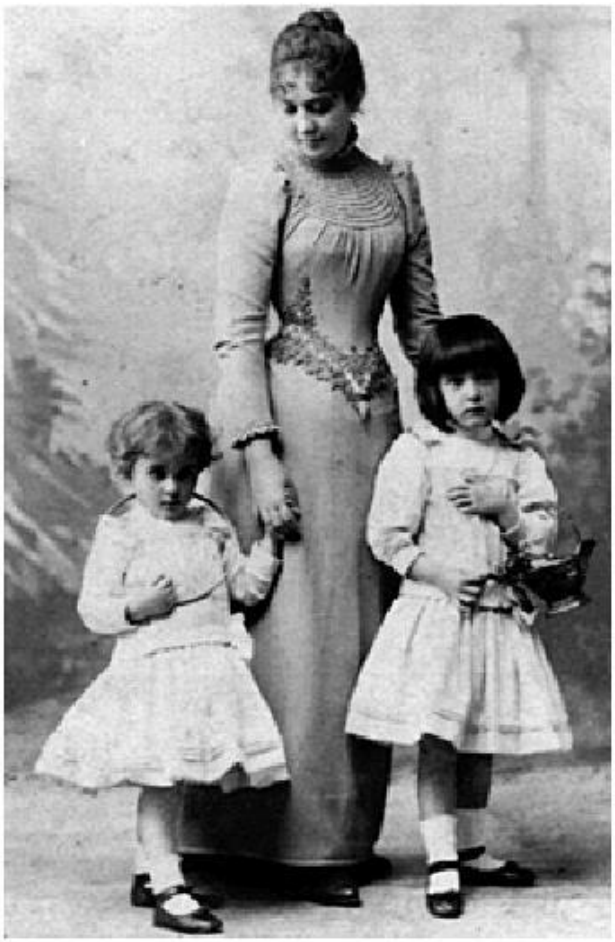
During Ferenczi's career, he attempted to use literature to evaluate psychology, especially Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea*, coincidentally similar to the original title for Lolita, *The Kingdom by the Sea*. In a letter from Ferenczi to Freud (who also paid tribute to literature) at the beginning of their correspondence, Ferenczi wrote:

> My next project will be a commentary on Ibsen's works in the light of their psychology. It is astounding how much he has anticipated. The Lady from the Sea, for example, could be compared with the psychoanalytic treatment of an obsessional idea. (17.7.08, I, 16)

He compared another Ibsen tale, *Peer Gynt*, with a patient's case. Ferenczi did not publish any of his findings. He does however look towards the artist to lead the way into seeing into that part of human nature that is closed to the analyst. Similar to Elma's earlier letter where she feels analysis closes off these discoveries, he says: 'Artists will from time to time appear to whom we may look for progress and new perspectives' (Ferenczi, 1928, 87). What my thesis shows is that James and Nabokov opened up 'new perspectives' in their fiction. While James reveals, through his father/daughter characters, some understanding of the psychoanalytical relationship that was to develop in real analysis, Nabokov criticises, parodies and reveals the failings of psychoanalysis. The silence that pervades both Elma and Ferenczi's 'story' can be seen in the characters Nabokov creates in both *Lolita* and *Ada*.

Perhaps the most touching fact about Elma, considering her many romances in youth, is that her one marriage was a disaster and that she never remarried. Her experience of living in a damaging triadic relationship makes her wise words to Bálint on the demise of his own marriage rather poignant:

> Wisdom and knowledge are all useless and we only get to know each other – thoroughly through living together – and so we only find out later whether two people are really compatible or not. I hope that the wounds in your soul, caused by this crisis, have healed by now and you can again find joy in life and your work! I wish you this with all my heart! (11.11.47)



Magda, Gizella and Elma

Part III

Vladimir Nabokov's Tales of Atonement

Chapter Nine

The Struggle for Language

Nabokov will be forever known for his 'little girls'. In Barry Gifford's collection of fiction, *Southern Nights* (1999), one of the characters ends up at the 'Nabokov Juvenile Depository for Females'. It seems Nabokov's reputation will always precede his literary merit yet he prided himself on his stylistic and linguistic skills and thought that Henry James had no artistry at all.

After reading *The Aspern Papers* (1888), Nabokov wrote to Edmund Wilson: 'He writes with a very sharp nib and the ink is very pale and there is very little of it in his inkpot […] The style is artistic but it is not the style of an artist […] Henry James is definitely for non-smokers' (*The Nabokov-Wilson Letters*, 28 November 1941, 59). Six years later Wilson pushed Nabokov to persevere with reading Henry James and suggested that he read *What Maisie Knew*. In response to Wilson's suggestion, Nabokov wrote that he had been 'reading a good deal of Henry James lately and am intending to write a piece called "The King (H.J. in this case) is Naked"' (19 December 1947, 206). Wilson continued to implore Nabokov to read *The Princess Casamassima* (1886) and *A Small Boy and Others* (1913), but Nabokov's last words on the subject were that he had read a collection of Henry James's short stories of which he said: 'miserable stuff, a complete fake, you ought to debunk that pale porpoise and his plush vulgarities some day' (10 August 1952, 308).

Despite his obvious dislike of James' work, Nabokov relented in his later life when he said in an interview:

> My feelings towards James are rather complicated. I really dislike him intensely but now and then the figure in the phrase, the *turn* of the epithet, the *screw* of an absurd

> adverb, cause me a kind of electric tingle, as if some current of his was also passing through my own blood. (Appel Jr, 1967)

There seems to be a deep-lying dichotomy between his strong opinions of James and the agitation he felt toward Freud and his theories. Yet, both writer and analyst inspired him to the extent that he would concentrate two of his longer novels, *Lolita* (1955) and *Ada* (1969), on the same concerns that James had: that of the difficulty of portraying a young woman. He alludes to James's writing in *Ada* and both novels are littered with jibes and barbs directed at Freud and his theories that emerge from analysis. Nabokov also reveals the same awareness as James of the shadowy and dangerous mother figure and he explores this character and the damaging effects she has on the daughter's story.

Nabokov's life appears in two parts; that of an émigré writer and translator, and of a writer of American taboo breaking fiction. His forced emigration from his native country in his youth lead to the loss of his language from which he never fully recovered. His fiction is liberally sprinkled with Russian, French, and German, revealing a fragmented mother tongue, seen in the characters of Lolita and Lucette. Their stunted and fragmented speech, punctuated with pauses, commas, and parentheses, reflects his struggle to speak in a second language. Nabokov's problem with expression is also revealed in *Ada*, in his fear of being misrepresented and misread.

In 1917, at the age of 18, he had left his idyllic life at his family home in Vyra, near St Petersburg, and fled to the Crimea to escape the Revolution. This would be the first of many, both forced and self-imposed, emigrations that would continue all his life, until he settled in Montreux at the age of 62. In 1964, Nabokov was confused as to his identity and wrote to Wilson of his journey to America, that he was not sure if they were 'going to America' or 'sailing home' (Schiff, 270).

In Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s, fellow émigré writers surrounded Nabokov.[1] Later in his life, he was saddened that none of these great Russian writers would be remembered by anyone but himself. Alfred Appel Jr showed Nabokov part of his book, *The Bitter Air of Exile*, which catalogues and has translated many, then unknown, Russian poets and writers. Nabokov was incredibly moved by the attempt to give recognition and voice to the forgotten artists of the Russian émigré culture that had disappeared.

Nabokov's poem 'An Evening of Russian Poetry' explores the themes of exile and the loss of his native language. He laments the beauty of the language in which he can no longer write. His all–American college girls whom fate had chosen to be the receptors of his knowledge, the 'Sylvia', 'Cynthia', and 'Emmy' to whom this poem is addressed, are filled with the wonder of the Russian noun:

> Beyond the seas where I have lost a sceptre,
> I hear the neighing of my dappled nouns,
> soft participles coming down the steps,
> treading on leaves, trailing their rustling gowns
>
> Once in a dusty place of Mora county
> (half town, half desert, dump mound and mescquite)
> and once in West Virginia (a muddy
> red road between an orchard and a veil
> of rapid rain) it came, that sudden shudder,
> a Russian something that I could inhale
> but could not see. Some rapid words were uttered –
> and then the child slept on, the door was shut.
> (Excerpts: 'An Evening of Russian Poetry', 1945)

The end of the poem sees Nabokov ask the Russian language forgiveness for his betrayal in only writing in English. We may assume that the sleeping child is Dmitri, Nabokov's only son.

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[1] In 1922, on leave from Trinity College, he travelled to Berlin, where his father was shot at a political rally by a stray bullet meant for someone else. This devastating event seemed to freeze something in Nabokov, who after some initial bravado about duelling with the assassins, would not refer to it again, and was very cagey when asked about it by Andrew Field, his biographer.

Living in Berlin for over fifteen years, he never once attempted to learn German. He said that it was down to his "fear of losing or corrupting through alien influence, the only thing I had salvaged from Russia" (*Lectures on Literature*, xx). It was only when he reached America, and immersed himself in Western culture and slang, that this fear caught up with him. In a letter to his wife, Véra, in 1942 two years after they had moved to Boston, he wrote:

> I walked more than an hour and went to bed at about eight. On my walk I was pleasantly pierced by a lightning bolt of inspiration, I had a passionate desire to write, and write in Russian and I must not. I don't think that anyone who has not experienced this feeling can really understand its tortuousness, its tragic aspect. The English language in this light is illusion and ersatz. (Field, 249)

Nabokov is conscious of his struggle to find the language he can write in and he projects this struggle on to his literary daughters. These are the same problems with articulation that we find in the psychoanalytical mangled stories of women in Freudian Vienna. In *Freud and Nabokov*, Geoffrey Green claims that:

> There is, in the case history as well as in the novel-as-case history, a sense in which the analyst-as-interpreter merges with the Nabokovian narrator: both exist as presences in the text, but both are also "impersonations" – aesthetic representations of two authors whose mode of expression is writing; two writers for whom the order of artistic form was also a falsification. (104)

Despite Nabokov's strong aversion to Freudian analysis, the reader can see the 'merging' of analyst and narrator in the case studies that both Lolita and Lucette embody. Both characters are given by Nabokov the fragmented narrative that a typical Freudian case study approach will foster. The personal bias, ulterior motives and memory issues of the analyst who writes up the patient's narrative after the analytical session means the narrative is both fragmented and unreliable. Yet Nabokov does not just merge the two, but like Henry James, recognises its limitations. Nabokov replicates this struggle for control over the daughter's narrative.

This problem of representing a story is also apparent in his fiction, including the short stories 'Mademoiselle O' and 'The Vane Sisters'.[2] Nabokov had written 'Mademoiselle O' in 1937, and this story became part of a chapter in his autobiography, *Speak, Memory* (1951). The story is based on his Swiss-French governess. In both the story, and in his real-life portrayal of Mademoiselle, he writes:

> I have often noticed that after I had bestowed on the characters of my novels some treasured item of my past, it would pine away in the artificial world where I had so abruptly placed it. Although it lingered on in my mind, its personal warmth, its retrospective appeal had gone and, presently, it became more closely identified with my novel than with my former self, where it seemed to be so safe from intrusion of the artist […] The man in me revolts against the fictionist and here is my desperate attempt to save what is left of poor Mademoiselle. (*Speak, Memory*, 75)

Nabokov writes of Mademoiselle's difficulty with language and of being heard. She was partly deaf and the only Russian word she could say was *gde* meaning 'Where?' Nabokov says she seems miserable and morose. He attempts to retrieve her from fiction and put her in his autobiography, and he questions whether he has been able to do this:

> Have I really salvaged her from fiction? Just before the rhythm I hear falters and fades, I catch myself wondering whether, during the years I knew her, I had not kept utterly missing something in her that was far more she than her chins or her ways or even her French. (93)

He questions his skill as the author of Mademoiselle's story and this recognition is related to his portrayal of his female characters in his fiction. James had been aware of the same problem and used his narrator and father figures to expose his understanding. In his autobiography, Nabokov wrote: 'There is an appendix to Mademoiselle's story' (*Speak, Memory*, 92). He includes details of other aged governesses who have lived long lives and thus his tale of Mademoiselle becomes mixed up with those of other governesses and she becomes one of many. Her individual story does not stand alone, and his attempts to write a fair appraisal of his experience under Mademoiselle's tutelage become almost futile.

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3. Surely 'Mademoiselle 'O'' is a nod to Breuer's 'Anna O'.

Mlle Miauton, Nabokov's model for 'Mademoiselle O'
with Vladmir (right) and his brother, Sergey.

In America, he found that the émigré culture he had so enjoyed in Berlin had disintegrated, and Russian writers like himself were flung to all corners of America, lecturing on what had by now become for him a mythical language. His isolation was apparent and it is evident in his most famous American novel, *Lolita.*

Mrs Vladimir Nabokov

Vladimir Nabokov's work cannot be discussed without considering the role of his wife, Véra. An interviewer in *The Listener* in 1969 asked Nabokov if he could say how important Véra had been as a contributor in his work. Vladimir simply replied: 'No, I could not' (23 October 1969, Schiff, xi). Since they had been married, in 1925, Véra had tirelessly translated, commented and modified his prose and sometimes even wrote his lectures on literature. After the publication of *Lolita*, which she saved from the incinerator, she had single-handedly dealt with all correspondence regarding its translation, the publishing rights, as well as all of Vladimir's personal correspondence. Véra's attention to detail and battles with editors seemed to have saved Nabokov's work from typist errors and mistranslation. Nabokov replicates a world without a 'Véra' in *Ada*, where Van's work is fraught with typing errors and unscrupulous editors.

Véra did not adapt to America as well as Nabokov. For the first few years, despite being multi-lingual, she had trouble with the language and so gained a reputation for being silent and reserved. According to her biographer, Stacy Schiff, Véra turned up to her first meeting with Nabokov, in Berlin, wearing a mask which Schiff suggests she symbolically wore for most of her life. Despite her own émigré status, and her own loss of country, culture and language, Véra, unlike Nabokov, refused to look back on and regret the past. In fact, her earlier life is so vague that many people had trouble pinning down who she was: '"She was a Polish Princess, wasn't she?" asked a translator who worked with her closely. One publisher was under the impression that she was French. Several of her husband's students knew her to be a German Countess' (Schiff, xii). This lack of certainty as to her past made her a mystery among both Nabokovs' acquaintance and, later, the media. Many searched for the truth in his fiction and attempted to credit Véra with the inspiration of Nabokov's

female characters. However, there was always a number of eager past lovers willing to take credit as the original muse of each.

Apart from the dedication of his fiction, which was always 'To Véra', the reader is only aware of a shadowy 'someone' in his autobiography whom Nabokov sometimes addresses but never names. He refers to her as 'you' (***Speak, Memory***, 102) and 'my dear' (226). Yet, Véra was his muse, and often his mirror. Gradually their opinions, handwriting, and even sentences became one, and Véra's life blended into that of her husband's. Schiff says: 'Hers is a life in the margins, but then – as Nabokov teaches us – sometimes the commentary *is* the story' (xiv).

While Véra translated and commented on his work, and took control of all Nabokov's business matters, she kept to the shadows and remained silent. To get through all the correspondence that was piling up after the emergence of *Lolita*, Véra used pseudonyms who could get away with the harsher tone, and often rude, phrases she chose to use.

Like the character of Ada who peppers Van's text with her comments and persistent interruptions regarding accuracy of fact and memory, Véra was impelled to sit in on all interviews with Nabokov, making sure the interviewer was accurate, and sometimes having to silence her husband when a stray comment or sentence could be construed inappropriately.[3] He began to depend on her for this. To Andrew Field she said, 'I am terribly concerned about accuracy, that the facts be right' (176). She kept creative control over all of Nabokov's work, eventually telling him which stories to publish and which to burn, providing him with a public persona that he was more than happy to fulfil.

Despite being adored by Nabokov, the impression biographers and readers have formed of Véra is very different from the women on whom Vladimir focuses his novels. Schiff suggests that:

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[3] Despite her efforts, on her father's death certificate she was written down as his wife.

> Most of the benevolent female characters in Nabokov are women we barely see; inside or outside the parentheses, quickly, efficiently, and often in childbirth, they die. They fail to materialize even in the words that bear their name. (Schiff, 161)

The only woman who saw beneath the mask was Filippa Rolf, a young Swedish poet and fan who helped with the translation and legal wrangle *Lolita* had created with the publishers in her country. Until the two met, Véra was of the opinion, which was also Nabokov's opinion that women could not write. Véra saw in Filippa great talent and she did all she could to get Filippa to America to study poetry there. The experience was a disaster for her. The relationship between her and the Nabokovs that had started out warm disintegrated. She became obsessed with the couple and would sometimes write up to twenty letters a day just to them. Filippa's obsession grew into psychotic episodes and she was institutionalised for a month. News of her sudden death was received without comment. Nevertheless, Filippa did manage to uncover parts of the real Véra, and this is possibly the reason for the Nabokovs eventually snubbing her.

In a letter to Filippa (dated March 22nd, 1966) Véra wrote:

> *Lolita* discussed by the papers from every possible view except one: that of its beauty and pathos. Critics prefer to look for moral symbols, justification, condemnation, or explanation of HH's predicament...I wish, though, somebody would notice the tender description of the child's helplessness, her pathetic dependence on monstrous HH, and her heartrending courage all along culminating in that squalid but essentially pure and healthy marriage, and her letter, and her dog. (Schiff, 235)

Like her husband, Véra also became frustrated with critical interpretations and misreading of Nabokov's novels.

Nabokov only once referred to Véra as his muse, but it is clear that she had everything to do with his ability to write. Véra lifted the burden of editors and publishers and gave him the freedom she would not give to herself to write. Despite Véra's dedication to typing his manuscripts, Nabokov was still anxious about the perils of typists who misspell and

misread, and editors who exerted control over his work. In *Ada*, Nabokov links Van's frustrations of this same experience with Lucette's inability to tell her story. I see this as Nabokov's recognition of the shortcomings of the analytical role, and a similar understanding of an author's struggle to portray the story of his character. Both Lolita and Lucette are an expression of his own inability to write in his native language, and the frustrations of publishing in English.

The All-American Girl

There were many sources of inspiration for Nabokov. His preoccupation with language was intensely personal. However, Nabokov would also seek ideas within American society. He focused on the behaviour of young girls and the portrayal of them in the American media.

Like Henry James, Nabokov sought to use his art to immortalize his characters.[4] He recognised that 'A book lives longer than a girl' (*Lectures on Literature*, 165). Lolita the girl has become iconic, the term attributed to juvenile delinquent females and to overly precocious girls. On the publication of *Lolita*, many reviewers saw Humbert's personality and opinions as akin to the author's, and indeed, many of Humbert's interests stem from Nabokov's own interest: the avid reading of diagnostic juvenile delinquent literature; sociological studies of young females; the 'sexology' readings of Havelock Ellis and other salacious reading of female case studies. Traces of Nabokov's ambitions for Lolita's "survival" slip into Humbert's last lines in the novel:

> One wanted H.H. to exist at least a couple of months longer, so as to have him make you live in the minds of later generations. I am thinking of aurochs and angels, the secret of

[4] Interestingly, despite Nabokov's hostile references to Henry James's talent, he had been promised the desk of Henry James by Henry's nephew Billy. Billy died before the promise could be fulfilled. (See Andrew Field, 261)

> durable pigments, prophetic sonnets, the refuge of art. And this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita. (307)

Nabokov realised that in his book, he can make his characters last. His desire to present to America the girl he saw in his classrooms, in the newspapers and the sexology studies of the day is entwined with Humbert's desire to possess this same girl. Nabokov studied the 'American girl' to an almost scientific degree. Véra said that: 'her husband had sat on the Ithaca buses with a notepad and listened carefully' and that he had 'haunted playgrounds' (Schiff, 214). Apart from his own 'sociological' studies of young girls however, the media provided many sources of real life inspiration that he could use and adapt in his novels.

In September 2005, Alexander Dolinin announced that he had found the 'real-life source of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*' (*TLS*, 9 September 2005). In the novel, Humbert already refers to the case of Sally Horner (288). She was abducted by Frank La Salle in 1948 and taken on a two-year cross-country road trip. After these two years, Sally called a relative and asked the FBI to come and get her. La Salle was given 30-35 years in prison and Sally was reunited with her mother. Dolinin documents the similarities between Lolita and Sally, describing the similarities between Humbert's and La Salle's persuasive techniques to make the young girls do what they want. La Salle had seen Sally stealing something from the dime store and threatened her with prison, while Humbert says he will send Lolita to a juvenile delinquent centre.

Dolinin claims that Nabokov had read the newspaper coverage of the Sally Horner case and used it as a base for the theme of his novel. The newspapers use suggestive descriptions in their coverage and so Sally was described as 'husky' and 'honey-haired'.[5] Nabokov was researching a generation of girls who were seen for their physical attributes and he applied these terms to Lolita.

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[5] Waukesha Daily Freeman, Wednesday, 22 March, 1950.

What Dolinin does not mention is that Sally's mother was partially complicit in the road trip. In the newspaper interview her mother, Ella revealed: 'In June, 1948, Sally said she had been invited to accompany two classmates and their father – a man named 'Warner' – to the seashore for a vacation. Mrs Horner talked to the man on the telephone and agreed to let her daughter go.'[6] The following day the Syracuse Herald revised the story this time calling Sally a 'runaway'. Sally and her mother's complicity in her abduction is not commented upon by Dolinin. Nabokov gives the character of Lolita the same dual personality as Sally, of innocent victim and complicit nymphet.

As the news story developed, Sally was interviewed and said that an older woman called 'Miss Robinson' had accompanied them on part of the road trip. Other 'characters' emerge including a 'Matron Smothers' and the whole case starts to resemble a Nabokovian story that has yet to be written.[7] These incidental mother figures all resemble aspects of Charlotte Haze and Ada: older women who are instrumental in the damage done to the psyche of both the young Lolita and Lucette.

Right up until La Salle's conviction he claimed that he was married to Sally's mother, despite her denials, and that he had never had sexual relations with Sally. In court, a young couple gave evidence to suggest that they had spent a day with both La Salle and Sally, and at no point did the girl try to elicit their help. They claimed that she affectionately called La Salle 'Daddy'.[8]

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[6] Syracuse Herald Journal, Wednesday 22 March, 1950.
[7] Nabokov's Humbert is not as monstrous as his real-life counterpart. La Salle had been convicted in 1943 of sexually abusing five adolescent girls, and six years before this, in 1937, had abducted a girl called Dorothy Dare. She and La Salle were found two weeks later but charges were dropped when it was revealed they were married. After this episode, Dorothy Dare vanished and it was reported that she had not been seen since.
[8] Oakland Tribune, California, Friday 24 March, 1950.

PHILADELPHIA — ABDUCTED GIRL HOME. Sally Horner, 13, missing almost two years, who was found at a San Jose, Calif., tourist camp with 53-year-old Frank LaSalle, unemployed mechanic, is greeted at Philadelphia Airport by her mother, Mrs. Ella Horner. LaSalle is charged with abduction. AP Wirephoto.

An uneasy Sally with her mother

Two years later, Sally was killed in a motor accident and Dolinin cites evidence that Nabokov read the *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, 19 August 1952, and had made notes on her story. It emerged that Sally had gone away to the seaside with a female friend, but this friend had returned home and left Sally to stay at the house of an older man. Her mother said 'she could not recall whether she knew him.'[9] Her mother's attitude to her daughter's whereabouts seems to have been marked by a consistent state of apathy and passive acceptance of her daughter's involvement with older men and Nabokov may have noted this sign of parental damage.

However, this news story provided Nabokov with access to more tales of juvenile woe. On the same pages as the Sally Horner news story in 1950, Nabokov would have read another story about a young starlet claiming her mother had beaten her and starved her to keep her small for the child roles, which would bring her $100 a day in the movies.

Lora Lee Michel, born in 1940, was a nine-year-old child actress who had appeared in nineteen films. She had complained that her adoptive mother had beaten and starved her.

[9] The Berkshire Evening Eagle, Pittsfield, Mass. Tuesday 19 August, 1952.

Child cruelty charges were filed against her adoptive mother and the case seemed to have made it into all the newspapers throughout America. In February of 1950, a scuffle in a custody hearing in court between Lora Lee's real mother and her adoptive mother had taken place, and despite the pending cruelty charges, the judge awarded custody to the adoptive mother on condition that she took her out of films. Despite her distress, Lora Lee certainly knew how to capture an audience: a newspaper revealed that: 'Lora Lee climbed up on Judge A.A. Scott's knee and received a judicial pat'.[10]

In March, when Lora Lee ran away after more beatings and persistent starvation, she ran straight across Sunset Boulevard to the Rev. E. Sundstrum's house. He was the first prosecution witness at the abuse trial and stated that: 'She had black and blue marks on one arm, her shoulders, buttocks and legs.'[11]

Lora Lee posing on Rev. Sundstrum's knee.

[10] Indiana Evening Gazette, Friday 10 February, 1950.
[11] Indiana Evening Gazette, Wednesday 22 March, 1950.

However, despite the Reverend's testimony, the judge declared that 'Lora Lee is a precocious, emotional child who could get a lot of people into trouble […] I can't tell when she's acting and when she's telling the truth.'[12] On the witness stand, Lora Lee painted a tearful picture of parental abuse. One news report said: 'As she left the stand, she winked at the defence attorney Cummins and he gave her a hug and a kiss.'[13]

Lora Lee later revoked her charges against her adoptive mother who was subsequently acquitted. The judge placed Lora Lee in Juvenile Hall and the newspapers reported that the Judge said she was "a problem child, without question" and that Mrs Michel [adoptive mother] said that if she regained custody of the $100-a-day actress she would have the girl undergo psychiatric treatment "because her little mind has been poisoned."'[14]

Lora Lee in Juvenile Hall

The Judge ruled that she become a ward of the court and said she must undergo a 'deglamourizing' process. He said: 'Lora is in need of play therapy […] She is a very lonesome child and psychological tests show that she is suffering from maladjustment in her social and emotional relationships.'[15] Lora Lee had previously complained that she was tired with the movies and in Juvenile Hall she said 'I'm sure glad to get back here […] One thing I like about it here is that they give you extra milk at 10.30 every morning.'[16]

[12] The Coshocton Tribune, Wednesday 15 March, 1950.
[13] Union Bulletin, Wednesday 22 March, 1950.
[14] Chronicle Telegram, Saturday 25 March, 1950.
[15] The Berkshire Evening Eagle, Friday 7 April, 1950.
[16] Chronicle Telegram, Tuesday 14 March, 1950.

Lora Lee bounced back; there are reports in the next couple of years of her life back in the movies. Nabokov creates his female characters with an 'actress' element in mind; Lolita is a wannabe actress and Ada stars in scandalous romantic movies.

In 1951, Lora Lee was again in the newspapers after her father had won a court case where he had sued the owner of a dog that he said had bitten Lora Lee on the face, thus scarring her and ending her acting career. The roles dried up, either coincidentally or because of this incident and she was not in the public eye again until 1963, when she was arrested for auto theft and fraud. In the meantime, she had married and had a son, then divorced and married again. She and her new husband had stolen her ex-husband's car and taken a road trip over the eastern and southern United States that lasted for six months. She was sentenced to 13 months in prison and when asked what had happened to her she replied, 'I grew up.'[17]

AP Wirephoto
Mrs. Lora Lee Scot: —

The newspapers containing these 'cases' are full of stories of juvenile delinquents, teenage abductions, road trips and girls growing up too fast. But Nabokov did not just limit his research into young girls with domineering mothers to newspapers. He became embroiled in a triadic affair of his own when he fell in love with Irina Guadanini. Stacy Schiff describes the details of the affair in her biography of Véra. In 1937, Nabokov and Irina started an affair and Irina's mother recorded everything in her diary, which Schiff uses in her research.

Irina's mother sent a letter to Véra telling her of the affair, and Vladimir contacted Irina's mother and subsequently wrote to her. Schiff says Irina's devotion was 'initially encouraged by her mother' (90) and after the affair ended, Irina became obsessed with

[17] Montana Standard, Sunday 3 March, 1963.

Nabokov. She wrote a short story about their relationship and professed herself the original inspiration for Lolita. She never recovered from the relationship, which her mother had encouraged, and until her death in 1976, she would obsessively cut newspaper clippings about both Véra and Nabokov.

In the last interview with Nabokov for BBC2, ('The Book Programme') Robert Robinson asked Nabokov if it is true that an author's obsession is repeatedly developed in his novels. Vladimir, who had previously written down his answers and was reading from a card, replied: 'The circus tiger is not obsessed with his torturer, my characters cringe as I come near with my whip [...] If I do have obsessions I'm careful not to reveal them in fictional form' (Quennell, 126). So why does Nabokov keep coming back to fictionalising the father/mother/daughter triangle, and giving the daughter a fragmented voice? Does *Lolita* symbolize 'Old Europe debauching young America' (Nabokov, 'On a Book Entitled *Lolita*', 312) or the other way round? Alternatively, is it a reflection on the painful loss of his native idiom, and an allegory of his struggle to write in a language he found second rate?

I think it is both. Both James and Nabokov see a danger in Europe, whether that is access to unsuitable talk, as in James's case, or the psychotic tendencies of men such as Humbert, infiltrating and poisoning the young minds of America. Having been an avid reader of case studies and having a concern for representing a female voice, Nabokov provides an analogy of the Freudian case study through his fiction and reveals the difficulty the daughter character has with articulating her own narrative. In addition, through this figure, Nabokov reveals his own difficulty, as an author writing in a foreign language. Nabokov's preoccupation with incestuous sexual father/daughter relationships almost obscures, for the reader, the equally potent mother character who, it is revealed, harms and fragments the daughter's language to the point that the daughter's own narrative is lost under the weight of the two parental figures.

Nabokov had said that he writes because he needs to get the story out, and be done with it, and that the reader should not look either for clues in the author's life or for a moral purpose. Nabokov said: 'In other words the reader has no business bothering about the author's intentions, nor has the author any business trying to learn whether the consumer likes what he consumes' (Quennell, 122). If we are to believe this, Nabokov has no obligation to art or to the reader, merely to please himself, but if this were so why did he not continue to write in Russian and have Vera translate his works?[18] Hidden in the jungle of his prose and literary puzzles lies the truth of his obsession; an unbearable admission that he has betrayed the language he so loved. As he admits in 'An Evening of Russian Poetry': 'My love, forgive me this apostasy'. Nabokov wrote this poem in recognition of what he saw as his betrayal of his native language, and he has Humbert Humbert and Van produce acts of atonements for what they see as their own recognition and betrayal of Lolita and Lucette.

Conclusion

Nabokov's last unfinished novel *The Original of Laura* suggests a final uncovering of something that had been replicated in his other novels.[19] Was the novel to be a peeling back of the layers of replica Lolitas to find the original? The work, described by Dmitri, his son, as his greatest work yet, was imprisoned in Nabokov's mind when he died.

Despite his opinions of women writers, he did give a voice to one woman, who he thought a 'poet of genius' (*Speak, Memory*, 220) and by translating unattributed lines of a poem from Russian to English he has immortalised her poetry. He gave his translation to Alfred Appel Jr who published it in his book *The Bitter Air of Exile*:

[18] Of course, the answer lies with sales and the Nabokovs' need to generate income, but even so, Nabokov could have written in Russian at any point and translated it into English rather than the other way around.
[19] This novel will be published in November 2009.

> Amidst the dust of bookshops, wide dispersed
> And never purchased there by anyone,
> Yet similar to precious wines, my verse
> Can wait: its turn shall come.

Marina Tsvetaeva had known Nabokov in Berlin, and had travelled back to Russia where she committed suicide. Nabokov translated the poem from Russian to English and through this translation, he had given a voice to a lost language.[20]

Finally, despite his own 'private tragedy'[21] with language, he had acquired legendary status amongst students, especially the girls on whom he based his characters. One female student said: 'I felt he could teach me how to read. I believed he would give me something that would last all my life – and it did' (Quennell, xxiii).

The generation of women who had emigrated towards the freedom of America, and escaped the analytical sessions of Vienna and Europe, had been replaced by the generation who were taught how to speak and how to write by lecturers and writers who had come from émigré Europe to search for this same elusive freedom.

Nabokov places his struggle for language on his daughter characters. He presents their efforts to articulate a story hidden within another narrative: Humbert's 'Confession' in *Lolita* and Van's family chronicle in *Ada*. The daughter's endeavours are complicated further by the mother figure. She can be seen to be the main source of the fragmentation of the daughter's voice.

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[20] Appel Jr in Quennell p. 29. Nabokov called the translation 'the product of my insomnia'.
[21] 'On a Book Entitled *Lolita*', 315.

Chapter Ten *Lolita*

Nabokov and the Viennese Witch Doctor.

In *Lolita*, Nabokov highlights the uneasy closeness between psychoanalysis and literature. He explores the use of each and in doing so explains his own use of the form of fiction. He uncovers the "destruction" of the female patient, at risk from the formats of the Freudian case study, and exposes 'mutual analyses' as only benefiting the self-obsessed analyst. While this novel is entitled *Lolita* and, like a case study, attempts to explain the woes of a young girl's life, Nabokov reveals that the very format of analysis and the case study can only fail. It can not reveal anything about its subject, but stunts and fragments Lolita's voice, as Humbert eventually realises.

Malcolm Bradbury suggests that writers in the 1950s 'looked under the bland surface of affluence and found an inner dismay and sense of moral confusion' (295). Nabokov benefitted from his poetic and cultural distance from America: he could write about his cultural findings, while at the same time immerse himself in it. Nabokov's use of comedy to cover pain extends to his use of parody of the Freudian case study. His gripes with Freud – the 'Viennese quack' as he called him – are well known (*Strong Opinions*, 47). In an interview with Alfred Appel Jr, he said: 'Let the credulous and the vulgar continue to believe that all mental woes can be cured by a daily application of old Greek myths to their private parts' (Appel, 1967, 130). On the other hand, Freud appears everywhere in Nabokov's novels and in his autobiography. While Nabokov does make fun of the dream theories and various complexes that arose out of psychoanalysis, in *Lolita*, he uses the form of the case study to reveal the poignancy of the damage Humbert causes.

In terms of the analysand's words to the analyst, Caroline Steedman suggests: 'It was the unsatisfactory nature of this first narrative that usually allowed the analyst to see [his] way about the case: it was with the gaps, the inconclusive narrative connections, the hesitations and spontaneous revisions as to date, time and place, that the patient presented clues to where the true account lay' (130). In this light, the analyst can be seen to be forming a full narrative that will benefit the patient. Nabokov shows that this is rarely the case. However, Steedman's view on analysis and the analyst does point out that Nabokov is following the paradigm of the analyst in having ultimately to create and form a narrative of Lolita. While Humbert is Nabokov's parody of an analyst, Nabokov must also piece together the fragments of Lolita's life, her words, and her actions to allow Humbert to recognize what he has missed in writing a 'Confession' about his tragic love affair.

Nabokov introduces a triadic relationship between Humbert, Charlotte (Lolita's mother), and Lolita that lasts for half the novel, at which point Charlotte is killed in an accident. Through Humbert's observations of Lolita and her mother in the first half, a damaging relationship between Lolita and Charlotte is revealed. We see that Lolita has been subject to a controlling mother who inflicts verbal abuse. The times when Humbert writes that he sees slivers of Lolita's pre-Humbertian existence are the times when her 'real' self is revealed. These moments are fragmentary and few in Humbert's narrative and perhaps the biggest shock for Humbert is the realisation that his is not the first triadic relationship of Lolita's life. His predecessor, Quilty, also courted both Lolita and her mother.

There is no doubt that Humbert's abuse damaged Lolita's ability to articulate her own story. Nevertheless, Nabokov presents to the reader and Humbert a girl whose voice was previously fragmented by her mother. Like Henry James, Nabokov recognises the deficiencies of the doctor/patient relationship. Through Lolita, Nabokov feminises his own

struggle with language, finding that the character of the young girl can perfectly replicate the poignancy of his 'private tragedy'.

Critics such as Herbert Grabes see that in the Forward to *Lolita*, written by the character John Ray, Jr, Nabokov makes clear that the novel is a parody of a case study. Some of the vocabulary Humbert uses is similar to Freud's letters to Ferenczi: 'Maidens…reveal their true nature which is not human, but nymphic (that is demoniac)' (*Lolita*, 16). In a letter to Edmund Wilson (dated 14 August 1956), Nabokov says that he has read Freud's letters to Fleiss, and his amused tone suggests he uses Humbert to parody Freud's language. Humbert also plays games with the analysts in the novel:

> I discovered there was an endless source of robust enjoyment in trifling with psychiatrists: cunningly leading them on; never letting them see that you know all the tricks of the trade; inventing for them elaborate dreams, pure classics in style (which make *them*, the dream-extortionists, dream and wake up shrieking); teasing them with fake 'primal scenes'; and never allowing them the slightest glimpse of one's real sexual predicament. (34)

It is obvious that Nabokov has set out to poke fun at Freud's dream theories, but the Forward is a warning that the reader must view the novel as Lolita's story and not Humbert's (despite Humbert's first person suggesting the contrary). John Ray says:

> As a case history, 'Lolita' will become, no doubt, a classic in psychiatric circles. As a work of art, it transcends its expiatory aspects; and still more important to us than scientific significance and literary worth, is the ethical impact the book should have on the reader; for in this poignant personal study there lurks a general lesson; the wayward child, the egoistic mother, the panting maniac – these are not only vivid characters in a unique story; they warn us of dangerous trends; they point out potent evils. (7)

Nabokov's jibes at Freud have focused on his dream theories and the psychoanalytical preoccupation with sex, but here, Nabokov touches on a more personal study of analysis: the triadic relationships that plagued Freudian psychoanalysts and their patients.

Mrs Haze: The Jealous Snake

Lolita's life before Humbert is kept purposely obscure and Humbert reveals only glimpses of her home life. As with all of Nabokov's novels, the truth lies in the details that often only become clear on a re-reading of the text. Her relationship with her mother, as was the case with Bertha and Elma, is difficult and damaging. Charlotte Haze is verbally abusive, and there is no father in the picture or sibling to complete the ideal family structure. Instead, Lolita and Charlotte spend their time shouting, hollering, and competing with each other, yet mutually dependent on each other to detract from their individual loneliness.

As James does with Mrs Penniman in *Washington Square*, Nabokov's Humbert ridicules Charlotte with his first glance:

> The poor lady was in her middle thirties, she had a shiny forehead, plucked eyebrows of a type that may be defined as a weak solution of Marlene Dietrich […] Her smile was a quizzical jerk of one eyebrow; and uncoiling herself from the sofa as she talked, she kept making spasmodic dashes at three ashtrays and the near fender (where lay the brown core of an apple); whereupon she would sink back again, one leg folded under her. (37)

Similar to James's descriptions of Mrs Penniman, Humbert's mockery of Charlotte attempts to minimize the damage both characters force upon the daughter figure. Humbert describes Charlotte as 'uncoiling', much like a snake, except Charlotte makes a poor figure of temptation for the apple is only a 'brown core' thrown on the empty fireplace.

Humbert assumes that Charlotte expects their relationship to develop from that of lodger and landlady, to lovers in a short time. It soon becomes clear that Charlotte competes with Lolita for Humbert's attention:

> At dinner tonight the old cat said to me with a sidelong gleam of motherly mockery directed at Lo (I had just been describing in a flippant vein, the delightful little toothbrush mustache I had not quite decided to grow): "Better don't if somebody is not to go absolutely dotty." (48)

Charlotte recognises Lolita's interest in Humbert and much to her consternation, teases her about it. The arguments between Lolita and Charlotte soon become the norm to Humbert: 'Later, I heard a great banging of doors and other sounds coming from quaking caverns where the two rivals were having a ripping row' (48).

Her mother describes Lolita's upbringing as though in the form of a case-study report, and likens Lolita's childhood to her own:

> Her grades were poor, but she was better adjusted in her new school than in Pisky (Pisky was the Haze home in the Middle West. The Ramsdale house was her late mother-in-law's. They had moved to Ramsdale less than two years ago). Why was she unhappy there?" "Oh," said Haze, "poor me should know. I went through that when I was a kid: boys twisting one's arm, banging into one with loads of books, pulling one's hair, hurting one's breasts, flipping one's skirt. Of course moodiness is a common concomitant of growing up, but Lo exaggerates. Sullen and evasive. Rude and defiant." (46)

Before Humbert's arrival, it seems Lolita has already been a troublesome child and that Humbert is not the catalyst. Her mother's behaviour towards her is a clue to her history. In one scene her mother thinks she has Humbert all to herself and is about to drive off when Lolita says: '"You! Where are you going? I'm coming too! Wait!" "Ignore her," yelped Haze'… '"It is intolerable," said Haze, violently getting into second, "that a child should be so ill-mannered. And so very persevering. When she knows she is unwanted" (50). Humbert's presence in the house adds to Charlotte's jealousy of her daughter.

She sends her to camp for the duration of the summer, and at the same time as she decides to banish her, she says she will stunt Lolita's speech. She discusses a dentist, a relation of the playwright Clare Quilty, and says: "In the fall I shall have to have him "brace" her, as my mother used to say. It may curb Lo a little" (63). Charlotte links Lolita's bad behaviour with her ability to speak, and by 'bracing' her, she uses the double meaning: Lolita's speech

will be physically impeded by the brace, but Charlotte hopes it will mentally repress her too. The collusion of the dentist and the mother here echoes Ferenczi acting as dentist to Elma while her mother holds her down.

Before Lolita leaves for camp, Humbert discusses the aesthetics of her tears, and that he wishes she would not cry in private. Under this description we see that Lolita and her mother have again argued and that it is completely normal for Lolita to cry:

> She had been crying after a routine row with her mother and, as had happened on former occasions, had not wished me to see her swollen eyes […] There was, however, more to it than I thought. As we sat in the darkness of the veranda (a rude wind had put out her red candles), Haze, with a dreary laugh, said she had told Lo that her beloved Humbert thoroughly approved of the whole camp idea "and now," added Haze, "the child throws a fit; pretext: you and I want to get rid of her; actual reason: I told her we would exchange tomorrow for plainer stuff some much too cute things that she bullied me into buying for her. You see, ***she*** sees herself as a starlet; I see her as a sturdy, healthy, but decidedly homely kid. This, I guess, is at the root of our troubles." (65)

Charlotte cannot see that her comments and insults wound Lolita, who ***is*** an unwanted child.

However, Charlotte's jealousy does not blind her to Humbert's desires. While driving Lolita to camp she has left behind a note for Humbert, which is her confession of love for him. In it, she says: '***But*** if, after reading my "confession," you decided, in your dark romantic European way, that I am attractive enough for you to take advantage of my letter and make a pass at me, then you would be a criminal – worse than a kidnapper who rapes a child' (68). Charlotte's allusions to Humbert's guilty and secretive desires, which she does not yet know, serve to provide insights into Charlotte's way of thinking. In the letter, she tells Humbert that her dead husband was twenty years her senior and Humbert must be shocked at the 'boldness of an American girl!' It is not clear if the 'American girl' refers to Charlotte or Lolita, but Charlotte, again, draws a parallel between herself and her daughter: the fondness for older men and the image of the 'all-American' girl. If Lolita is bold with older men, she is only following her mother's example.

Once Lolita is at camp, Humbert discovers that Charlotte despised Lolita. He says: 'Oh, she simply hated her daughter! What I thought especially vicious was that she had gone out of her way to answer with great diligence the questionnaires in a fool's book she had (*A Guide to your Child's Development*), published in Chicago' (81). Charlotte only ticks the boxes where Lolita exhibits negative traits, such as aggressive, listless, negativistic 'underlined twice' (81). He comments on her 'brutality' (81) with which she banishes Lolita's belongings from most areas of the house.

From camp, Lolita writes a letter that displays her struggle to find the right words. She writes:

> DEAR MUMMY AND HUMMY,
> Hope you are fine. Thank you very much for the candy. I [crossed out and re-written again] I lost my new sweater in the woods. It has been cold here for the last few days. I'm having a time. Love, DOLLY. (81)

Her playful greeting belies the difficulty she has expressing herself. Humbert relays her letter word for word, including the crossed out word. Her hesitation with using 'I' is repeated later in the novel, and can be seen to be a struggle with identity and a deliberation over whether to discuss herself. Humbert writes: '"The dumb child," said Mrs Humbert, "has left out a word before 'time.' That sweater was all-wool, and I wish you would not send her candy without consulting me"' (81). We are supposed to believe that the missing word is good, but the gap allows for other sorts of time, which Charlotte fails to see. Of course, losing the sweater with the additional sentence mentioning the cold weather should provoke sympathy, but Charlotte does not feel this.

When Humbert visits Lolita at her house in an unnamed dusty town, when she is married and pregnant, she tells Humbert that theirs was not the first triadic relationship she had been

involved in with her mother. The man who had been pursuing them throughout their road trip was Clare Quilty. Lolita tells Humbert:

> Well, did I know that he had known her mother? That he was practically an old friend? That he had visited with his uncle in Ramsdale? – oh, years ago – and spoken at Mother's club, and had tugged and pulled her, Dolly, by her bare arm onto his lap in front of everybody, and kissed her face, she was ten and furious with him? (272)

Before being shot, Quilty says to Humbert: 'I knew your dear wife slightly' (302). The implication is that, despite his impotence, Quilty had a relationship with Charlotte while being interested in Lolita. When Lolita reveals Quilty's identity to Humbert, his first thought is the way Charlotte said 'Waterproof' when they were by the lake (272). His thoughts stray to Charlotte because she is the link between Quilty and Lolita. He realizes that Quilty was his predecessor in the triadic relationship Charlotte and Lolita seem so used to being in.

Charlotte had a damaging effect on Lolita before Humbert's arrival. Following Charlotte's example, Lolita allows herself to be led by Humbert without knowing that their relationship is immoral or illegal. The similarities between mother and daughter are seen much later when Humbert begs Lolita to leave her husband Dick and come with him. He describes her as: 'opening her eyes and raising herself slightly, the snake that may strike,' (278). Humbert's first description of Charlotte was that she 'uncoiled', and he uses the brown apple core to refer to the snake in the Garden of Eden. However, Charlotte is an imitation snake, Lolita is the real thing.

The Fragmented Garden

In *Lolita*, Humbert is the only narrator. He writes his 'Confession' primarily for the jury who are to try him for his crimes, and in the hope that some day Lolita will read his testimony. Therefore the reader relies on 'blips' and moments of regret and remembrance in his account of his time spent with Lolita, to try and piece together a story that is just Lolita's.

Humbert describes her speech as 'crude nonsense', 'raucous' and 'slangy'. Her speech is often cut off and she stammers. The gaps in her speech are absences that either Humbert fills in himself, as an analyst would do in a case study, or he describes what she says, as Ferenczi had done to Elma's voice in her letters. When he zooms in to lick something out of her eye, she starts to say; "It is noth –" (44), and the silence hangs. When Humbert attempts some sort of tender fondling a shrill, hysterical note enters her voice. He writes that she says: '"Oh, it is nothing at all," she cried with a sudden shrill note in her voice, and she wiggled, and squirmed."' (61). When they are travelling through America one day, Humbert becomes amorous: '"Drive on," my Lo cried shrilly' (141). Humbert describes tone of her voice, and in the act of writing this down suggests he recognises the despair he inflicts upon her.

When he picks her up from camp, she pleases him by saying: "I was taught to live happily and richly with others and to develop a wholesome personality. Be a cake, in fact [...] We loved the sings around the fire in the big stone fireplace or under the darned stars, where every girl merged her own spirit of happiness with the voice of the group" (114). Humbert does not seem to notice that Lolita could be reading out of the camp brochure.

Her speech is often stilted and her sentences are left unfinished, possibly through Humbert's censorship in his 'Confession' or because Lolita simply cannot not finish her

sentences: '"Half-past" – she stifled another yawn –"six" – yawn in full with a shiver filling all her frame. "Half-past," she repeated, her throat filling up again' (121). Lolita rarely completes a full and uninterrupted sentence. On their first night together, she tries to tell Humbert about her sexual experience at camp, but he has drugged her, and so she cannot get the words out. He does not want to listen anyway: '"Lemme tell you – " "Tomorrow, Lo. Go to bed" (122).

Although the novel contains no obscene language, Lolita does swear often. It is not printed, and Humbert finds such language distasteful: "Dolly has written a most obscene four-letter word which our Dr Cutler tells me is low-Mexican for urinal with her lipstick on some health pamphlets" (195). From Humbert, the reader only ever gets a description of the words, or a translation from English to French. Humbert censors Lolita's only means of expression.

Lolita wishes to learn Humbert's European tongue including French and Latin, but she mocks him with her appalling accent. When in hospital, she says: "Do you mind cutting out the French, it annoys everybody" (243). Her own language, in front of Humbert is that of the Hollywood movie scene and teen magazines. She uses words such as 'swell' and 'gee', and describes herself as 'frank and fetching' (113), aping an advertisement of consumer culture. She is full of quips – 'You got a flat, mister' (226), spawned from the movies of that era. Humbert is excluded from this 'teen tongue', even when he tries to speak it:

> "Come and kiss your old man," I would say "and drop that moody nonsense. In former times, when I was still your dream male [the reader will notice what pains I took to speak Lo's tongue], you swooned to records of the number one throb-and-sob idol of your coevals [Lo: "Of my what? Speak English"]. (149)

Humbert even reverts at one point to baby-language: – "Show, wight ray" (120). Lolita's speech is often put into parenthesis, as if it is an afterthought, and is caged in the form of

punctuation as in the above quote. Humbert cannot penetrate her language, because her language is often an act, a form of disguise to mislead Humbert from the real Lolita. Humbert even likes it when she says '"Oh dear!" in humorous wistful submission to fate, or emitting a long "no-o" in a deep almost growling undertone when the blow of fate had actually fallen' (187).

At one point, in parenthesis, we learn she had been desperate to talk to a family she recognises: '("Look, the McCrystals, please, let's talk to them, please" – let's talk to them, reader! – "please! I'll do anything you want, oh, please…")' (155). Humbert prevents her from talking and admits to it.

The teachers at Beardsley College form a case study report of Lolita. Here she sighs a lot in class, her voice is pleasant, she giggles often, but cannot verbalize her emotions, and that she refuses to discuss her home situation. The language used mocks the American habit of pinning down children into 'types':

> Dolly Haze is a lovely child, but the onset of sexual maturing seems to give her trouble […] The general impression is that fifteen-year-old Dolly remains morbidly uninterested in sexual matters, or to be exact, represses her curiosity in order to save her ignorance and self-dignity. All right – fourteen. (191-3)

Later, Humbert finds Lolita reading a chapter entitled 'Dialogue' in a book called *Dramatic Technique* (198). Nabokov shows Lolita reading a book that will tell her how to talk, screaming out his message that her speech has been severely restricted.

Humbert's knowledge of Lolita's personality only involves himself. He does not look deeper for a troubled child, even when, at the end of the novel, he realises he did not know her at all. With the realisation of how little he meant to Lolita, he also realises that she had

her own thoughts, her own personality, and her own feelings, which he had previously took to being akin to his own. He remembers a conversation between her and her friend Eva:

> "You know what's so dreadful about dying is that you are completely on your own"; and it struck me, as my automaton knees went up and down, that I simply did not know a thing about my darling's mind and that quite possibly, behind the awful juvenile clichés, there was in her a garden and a twilight, and a palace gate –dim and adorable regions which happened to be lucidly and absolutely forbidden to me. (283)

Humbert realises that Lolita has had, all this time, a personality, and a life that she had kept secret. It is only with hindsight that Humbert remembers other scenes, which were clues to this secret, and which he failed to see. He remembers a scene where one of Lolita's chubby friends is sitting on her father's lap. He describes Lolita's 'myopic' smile when watching this scene:

> Suddenly, as Avis clung to her father's neck and ear while, with a casual arm, the man enveloped his lumpy and large offspring, I saw Lolita's smile lose all its light and become a frozen little shadow of itself, and the fruit knife slipped off the table and struck her with its silver handle a freak blow on the ankle which made her gasp, and crouch head forward, and then, jumping on one leg, her face awful with the preparatory grimace which children hold till the tears gush, she was gone – . (286)

Humbert's description of fatherly tenderness, something Lolita's experience of knee-sitting lacks, provokes Humbert to realise 'Lolita had nothing' (285). Humbert's 'Confession' follows a similar pattern to Ferenczi's last essays. Both include recognition of past mistakes, past actions wherein another suffered, in this case the patient/daughter, and both Humbert's 'Confession' and Ferenczi's essays act as a form of atonement.

Humbert realises that between Lolita's 'trite brashness and boredom', and Humbert's 'desperately detached comments' (284), they could not discuss anything personal, and all their discussions have been artificial. Humbert can only read falsity in Lolita whenever she attempts to reveal details of her earlier life:

> "Oh, look, all the nines are changing into the next thousand. When I was a little kid," she continued unexpectedly, "I used to think they'd stop and go back to nine, if only my mother agreed to put the car in reverse."
> It was the first time, I think, she spoke spontaneously of her pre-Humbertian childhood; perhaps, the theatre had taught her that trick. (217)

This 'trick' seems to be the sympathy and emotion that she elicits in him when she talks about her childhood.

Lolita's narrative becomes, what Edward Said called 'broken narratives'. Of these narratives, Michael Wood suggests:

> It's not that the powerless don't have stories, and it's not only that they don't get to tell the stories they have. It's that they are scarcely perceived as capable of having stories, their stories are not so much refused as ruled out, imaginable as pieces of recognized history […] But narrative is not always on the side of power, nor is it only the representation of power. There are narratives of resistance as well as of dominance; and narratives that slip past the guard of power, either through irony or through seeming too negligible for power's attention. (165)

Critics such as Linda Kauffman are perpetually looking for Lolita's voice, asking if she has one, and often concluding, like Humbert, that she lives through Humbert's art but without an individual narrative. For most of the novel, Humbert does not attempt to explore Lolita's narrative. There are times when Lolita presents to him her inner 'garden' but these are through images and not words.

One of these imaged scenes takes place when Humbert's paranoia is peaking. The story descends into the unreal, and the possibility emerges that Lolita meets her alter ego, the young girl she could have been. After their row at Beardsley, they take another road trip and Lolita chooses the route. While Humbert reads a letter addressed to Lolita that he had collected from the Post Office, Lolita disappears. He wonders if he has lost her forever, and later, wonders why she did not leave him that day. She returns and he vigorously interrogates her as to her whereabouts:

> Presently she left the car and was at my side again. My sense of hearing gradually got tuned in to station Lo again, and I became aware she was telling me that she had met a former friend.
> "Yes? Whom?"
> "A Beardsley girl."
> "Good. I know every name in your group. Alice Adams?"
> "This girl was not in my group."
> "Good, I have a complete student list with me. Her name please."
> "She was not in my school. She is just a town girl in Beardsley."
> "Good. I have the Beardsley directory with me too. We'll look up all the Browns."
> "I only know her first name."
> "Mary or Jane?"
> "No – Dolly, like me."

Lolita leads Humbert to the place she thought she met Dolly, and they stand in front of a store window.

> It was indeed a pretty sight. A dapper young fellow was vacuum-cleaning a carpet of sorts upon which stood two figures that looked as if some blast had just worked havoc with them. One figure was stark naked, wigless and armless. Its comparatively small stature and smirking pose suggested that when clothed it had represented, and would represent when clothed again, a girl child of Lolita's size. But in its present state it was sexless. Next to it, stood a much taller veiled bride, quite perfect and ***intacta*** except for the lack of one arm. On the floor, at the feet of these damsels, where the man crawled about laboriously with his cleaner, there lay a cluster of three slender arms, and a blonde wig. Two of the arms happened to be twisted and seemed to suggest a clasping gesture of horror and supplication. (226)

Lolita's disappearance had been to meet up with Quilty. Nabokov includes this scene as an image to represent Lolita's fragmented life, as Humbert notices himself when he says of the mannequins: "Is not that a rather good symbol of something or other?" (226) Lolita's encounter with another girl called Dolly is a portrayal of another life she could have led as a normal child in a small town in Middle America. After their first night together at The Enchanted Hunters hotel, Humbert feels that Lolita was a 'small ghost of somebody' he had just killed (140). Lolita remains that ghost while the other Lolita she meets with is the girl she could have been.

The mannequins in the window are symbolic of Lolita's fragmented voice. The armless models are the dismembered aspects of Lolita, whose story has been fragmented by Humbert's prose. Humbert sees the first model to be similar to Lolita in size, and the smirk suggests this mannequin represents Lolita pre-Humbert. However, unclothed and wigless, the model remains sexless. The bride is of course the future Lolita, but the model is also missing an arm. The dismembered models represent the fragmented personality of Lolita within Humbert's 'Confession'. The scene of dismembered female bodies is similar to Ferenczi's dream of the dissected woman, a memory of Elma whose voice he had also fragmented. In this sense, the body becomes the metonymic repository for the fragmented female voice.

The two stages of her life, girl child and bride, follow the same voiceless pattern. Humbert does not listen to Lolita now because his 'Confession' concentrates on himself, while in the future, when married to Dick, Lolita still cannot be heard because Dick is deaf. Like Elma, whose father also suffered from deafness, these 'daughters' will not be heard by anyone. Likewise, Elma's analysis with Freud and Ferenczi had been misrepresented in their correspondence, and Ferenczi's responses to her letters show his refusal to hear her pleas for release.

Marie C. Bouchet suggests that the nature of the nymphet in *Lolita* as a 'hybrid creature' involves an ambivalence. She suggests there is a 'constant fragmentation process at work in the various depictions of nymphets' (101).

> The text strives toward a thorough description of the bodies of nymphets while never managing to provide an overall image. Descriptions of nymphets are but an incomplete collage of pieces […] The written text cannot supply a complete picture of its object, but has to articulate it word by word, limb by limb. Hence every description of a nymphet relies on a tension between movement (the changing nature of the girl) and stasis (the describing process that tries to fix her in words). (102)

Bouchet's view gives the impression that the fragmentation that occurs is ultimately innate in Lolita only because of her nymphic quality and is therefore pre-Humbert (although she is only a nymphet in the eyes of Humbert). However, I believe Lolita is already a fragmented character due to her paternally deprived and maternally abusive upbringing. Throughout her two years with Humbert, Lolita does attempt to show Humbert these fragments, but he only touches on the 'symbol of something or other' and cannot complete the thought.

Nabokov connects this image of a fragmented person and voice with his own struggle with language and his own identity as a Russian novelist living in America. In his author's note after the novel, 'On a Book Entitled *Lolita*', he uses the same image. He says that while writing *Lolita*: 'the only discomfort I really experienced was to live in my workshop among discarded limbs and unfinished torsos' (316). These body parts become an emblem for the émigré writer, writing in another language, another country, and finding that language 'second-rate' (317).

Humbert's 'Confession' is full of remorse and regret. By consigning Lolita to art, ('the refuge of art,' 309), Humbert atones the only way he knows how, for he too has nothing, except, as he mentions at the beginning: 'I have only words to play with' (32). His last few lines in the novel are rigidly sentimental and are an ode to Lolita.

Mrs. Richard F. Schiller

In the last scene with Lolita (now Mrs. Richard Schiller), the artificial conversation Humbert thought they had for their two years on the road has dissolved, and now they can talk. After another two years away from Humbert, Lolita has written to him begging for money for herself and her husband. In this letter, Lolita is very clear and open about her

feelings. She says: 'I have gone through much sadness and hardship' (266). Humbert is just plain Dad instead of the previous 'Hummy', and there is no humour. There is a sense of weariness and the tone is no longer sarcastic or attempting to disguise her main aim, her need for money.

Humbert traces her to a dusty town north of New York City. She has always had outbursts of bluntness, often using words such as 'rape' (140) and 'incest' (119), where Humbert can only wince at these terms. However, in this last scene, she struggles to find the words, before eventually giving up. Humbert wishes to know what she did at Quilty's ranch:

> "What things exactly?"
> "Oh, things…Oh, I – really I" – she uttered the "I" as a subdued cry while she listened to the source of the ache, and for lack of words spread the five fingers of her angularly up-and-down-moving hand. No, she gave it up, she refused to go into particulars with the baby inside her. (277)

Lolita cannot discuss the sex play at Quilty's ranch, and her refusal is a triumph over Humbert's persistence in wanting to know everything. Ferenczi also tried to force Elma to discuss her fantasies, so Nabokov draws a parallel between Humbert and the analyst, and ultimately, through defiance, the patient wins. As with Lolita's hesitant 'I' in her letter from camp, she cannot put her grown up 'I' in to the "crazy things, filthy things" that Quilty wanted her to do (277). She uses a 'slang term' to describe them, but Humbert refuses to print the word, using a French translation instead. While he expects Lolita to reveal all, he refuses the print it. He, the self-confessed pervert, is appalled by Lolita's descriptions of what goes on at Quilty's ranch.

Lionel Trilling has said of Lolita, that she 'has very few emotions to be violated' (9), but even Humbert notices that she has many emotions. She is prone to crying fits: "her sobs in the night – every night, every night – the moment I feigned sleep" (173). She is not

affectionate in the slightest. She sees any fond contact with Humbert as distasteful and shrugs Humbert off. The numbness, with which she greets Humbert at the end of the novel, is worse to Humbert than if she had been traumatised and hysterical. In the scene at her ramshackle house at the end of the novel, she uses arm and wrist gestures and emits only 'hms', not wanting to speak to him. Humbert, slightly afraid of Lolita's voice, mentally supplies possible rejoinders to his own now stilted conversation:

> I almost said –trying to find some casual remark – "I wonder sometimes what has become of the little McCoo girl, did she ever get better?" – but stopped in time lest she rejoin: "I wonder sometimes what has happened of the little Haze girl…" (278).

When he asks her to come with him, he again writes what he thinks she will say:

> "No," she said, "it is quite out of the question. I would sooner go back to Cue. I mean –" She groped for words. I supplied them mentally ("*He* broke my heart. *You* merely broke my life"). (279)

Humbert begins to recognise the damage he has done to Lolita, and through him, Nabokov can show his strong dislike of the analytical case study, and the futility of its aim. Like James's hesitant narrator in ***Washington Square***, Humbert cannot represent Lolita's story, and can only form his version of her story. In ***Ada***, Nabokov would explore this further and has Van struggle with the same recognition of the futility of representing a female voice and her story.

Conclusive Evidence[1]

In his Afterword, Nabokov mentions his own 'private tragedy' which was his struggle to maintain and not lose sight of his own language, while trying to forge a career and find a way of producing literature in a new one. I think he imagines and explores the struggle of

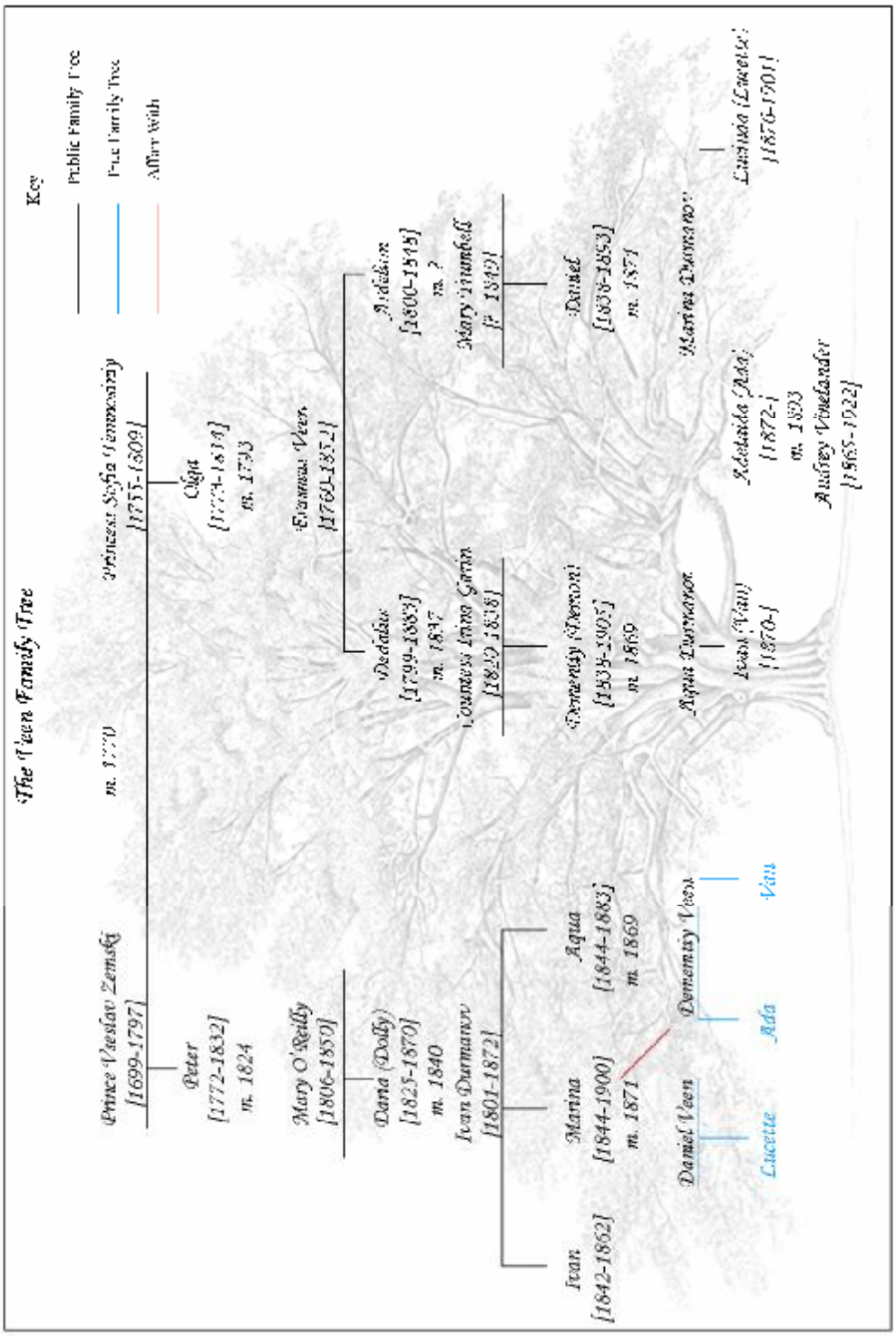
[1] *Conclusive Evidence* (1951) was Nabokov's autobiography, later revised, and renamed *Speak, Memory* (1966).

Freudian patients to narrate their problems in these dark Viennese rooms, while keeping back some private part of their self that they do not want to be analysed, published, and made available for public consumption.

Nabokov's contempt for Freud covers more than just the format of the case study. Leland de la Durantaye explores Freud's sexualisation of innocent children and this may have appalled Nabokov, whose own childhood in Vyra was sacred. He makes a point in his autobiography of disagreeing with Freud: 'It was the primordial cave (and not what Freudian mystics might suppose) that lay behind the games I played when I was four' (*Speak, Memory*, 20). Nabokov exposes the analyst as a 'pornographer' (*Lolita*, 313), such is his desire to discredit psychoanalysis. In *Ada*, written fourteen years later, he seems to revise this opinion, and creates a mini Eden in Ardis, a resemblance to his own childhood home. Here he explores the corruption of Ardis, and the torment, which Ada and Van impose upon Lucette.

In his Afterword to *Lolita*, Nabokov may have told his readers not to look for a moral, but John Ray, Jr's warning in the Forward cannot be ignored: 'the wayward child, the egotistic mother, the panting maniac – these are not only vivid characters in a unique story: they warn us of dangerous trends; they point out potent evils' (6). Nabokov emphasises the danger of triadic relationships, and in this way, his insight is similar to that of James. Both see the 'trend' in damaging triadic relationships between a mother/daughter and father figure, and can reveal the results of this triad: an insight closed to the analyst.

Chapter Eleven ***Ada or Ardor***



The 'Impeccable Paranymph'

In 1969, Nabokov wrote his last major novel, *Ada or Ardor*, which, while displaying the usual Nabokovian components of incest, triadic relationships, and linguistic quibbles, marks a change from his traditional motif of father/daughter incest and instead revolves around sibling incest in the Veen family. Ardis, the featured ancestral home, becomes a mini Eden for the two protagonists, Ada and Van, and a hell for Lucette, the daughter and little sister figure in this triangle. She is the 'impeccable paranymph' (265) of the novel, whose manners and sense of duty mean that she puts her love of Ada and Van above herself. Nabokov again shows that an older sister/woman can have a detrimental effect on a young and naïve girl and while Van is not innocent, he too is led by Ada.

Through Van, who is a psychologist, Nabokov can reveal his view that psychoanalysis takes over the story of the patient and turns it into an alternative narrative. Nabokov reveals his recognition and understanding of the author's problematic attempts to portray the visually and vocally fragmented young girl. He projects his frustration with typists who misspell and his fear of editors who alter his novels, on to Van, who experiences these same issues. In these scenes while Van corrects the typist, Lucette is, at the same time, attempting to tell her story. Nabokov connects the interrupted story of Lucette, with his own problems of authorship, the perils of editors and critics, and his anxiety over misreading and mistranslations of his work. Lucette becomes silenced through Van's narrative, and is shown as only successfully communicating through hand signals and other forms of communication.

The novel chronicles the aristocratic family of the Veens. Van and Ada are siblings but have been raised as cousins. Lucette is Van and Ada's half sister. Their true relationship

is not revealed until halfway through the novel. The novel starts in Ardis before telling the story of Ada and Van's parents. The two Veen brothers, Demon and Dan marry two sisters, Marina and Aqua. Demon, married to Aqua, has an affair with Marina over a number of years and conceives first Van, who is passed off to mentally ill Aqua as her own child, (her own was still-born) and then Ada, who is passed off as Dan's, who is married to Marina. Dan and Marina later have Lucette who suffers from her own love for Van and Ada, as Aqua suffers from her love for Demon and Marina.

The novel is a memoir, divided into five parts, and written by the aged Van. He documents the history of his and Ada's love affair, which starts in 1884 and ends just before their death. He recounts the story of his parents' affairs, his and Ada's own numerous affairs, his own career as a psychologist and Lucette's suicide. Hidden in this memoir, he reveals Lucette's attempts to articulate her emotions, and the torments he realises that he and Ada inflicted on Lucette. Ada takes on the role of the older and manipulative female who controls Lucette's life. While Van shares part of the blame for Lucette's tragic life, he does take the same fatherly role that Humbert takes towards Lolita in terms of writing a narrative that would atone for his crimes against the daughter. The three make up a similar triad, found in James's novels and in *Lolita*.

The torture Ada and Van inflict on Lucette in the summers of 1884 and 1888 lasts a lifetime. To keep Lucette from interrupting their amours, they devise numerous plans to keep her distracted. These include asking her to do imaginary favours for them, to tying her up to a tree. In 1901, Lucette travels by ship with Van to Amerirussia (America having been conquered by Russia in this parallel yet familiar universe of Terra), and commits suicide by jumping overboard.

Throughout the novel Lucette's voice appears fragmented through Van. The manuscript for Van's family chronicle has supposedly been left unaltered and published posthumously by his editor, Ronald Oranger. It has been typed up by Van's secretary Violet (also Oranger's wife), and is presented with parentheses containing comments and suggestions for alterations or corrections by Ada, now 93 years of age. Within the manuscript, the aged pair argue over details and facts. Ada is only allowed a voice in parentheses, and while it could be said that *her* speech is fragmented and that she does not have a true voice in the novel, we sense that she is actually interrupting Van's narrative. There are many times in the novel when Van acknowledges this has happened in their past.

In their critiques of *Ada*, Brian Boyd and Bobbie Ann Mason squarely blame Lucette's tragic life on Van, but surely Ada is equally if not more culpable for her half sister's lonely life. Ada suggests the cruel games to divert Lucette from her and Van's urges. Ada later introduces Lucette to an incestuous lesbian affair, knowing that Lucette loves Ada because she so closely resembles and is close to Van.

Van's narrative gives an account of Lucette that is filled with snap shots and fragments. Parts of her body are visually dissected (as in the case of Humbert's descriptions of Lolita, and Ferenczi's dream/fantasy of Elma), and she is only seen in flashes. She cannot speak without Van's constant musings or interruptions.

Nabokov's own anxieties about being misquoted are reflected in Van's problems with his secretaries, which I shall later discuss. Nabokov's own 'private tragedy' is more forcefully played out in Van's portrayal of Lucette, who cannot compete with Ada and Van's extremely intelligent word play and good control of language. She is constantly fighting for recognition from Ada and Van in her childhood, and Van chronicles her life as

he would one of his case studies, including Nabokov's obvious allusions and total contempt for Freud and his technique.

Lucette: A Fragment of an Image

Brian Boyd (2001), analyses Lucette's character with her death in mind. He says:

> I do not want to suggest for a moment that Nabokov wrote *Ada* primarily to expound an ethical system, but the evidence shows that he expounded extraordinary artistic energy in documenting via Lucette the demonic side of Van and Ada in a way that the ordinary reader cannot even suspect. (113)

Despite the many digressions into mythical and fictional history: the ramblings of Van's hypothesis on time, and the main plot of the epic love affair between Van and Ada, Lucette is at the crux of the plot. As Boyd suggests, the tragedy within the story and the reason why the reader dislikes Van and Ada is because of their abusive treatment towards Lucette. However, we must also remember that Van wrote this manuscript, with many comments and additions from Ada and his editor, Ronald Oranger. This tragedy is told from Van's point of view, and therefore while he attempts to write Lucette's story, it is ultimately his interpretation of this narrative. Lucette's character is mythologized and romanticised through Van. In an extremely difficult novel that purposely misleads the reader with its linguistic games and use of trilingual characters, it is hard to find any sign of Lucette's own voice or Van's guilty and despairing feelings about his own role in her life. These are all obscured by his love for and obsession with Ada. Nevertheless, we can pick out his attempts to present Lucette's story in the images Van associates with her, and in their few conversations together.

Van describes our first image of Lucette as a child:

> He came upon a person whom he recognized with disgust as being his former governess (the place swarmed with ghosts!). She was sitting on a green bench under the Persian lilacs, a parasol in one hand and in the other a book from which she was reading aloud to a small girl who was picking her nose and examining with dreamy satisfaction her finger before wiping it on the edge of the bench. Van decided she must be 'Ardelia,' the eldest of the two little cousins he was supposed to get acquainted with. Actually, it was Lucette, the younger one, a neutral child of eight, with a fringe of shiny reddish-blond hair and a freckled button for a nose: she had had pneumonia in spring and was still veiled by an odd air of remoteness that children, especially impish children, retain for some time after brushing through death. (35)

Lucette is always associated with the colour green, as here she sits on the bench amid the flora of Ardis. Her action of picking her nose is carefree and normal without either Ada's or her own later pretensions of sophistication. Van mistakes Lucette for Ada; the first of many comparisons between Lucette and Ada. He sees certain of Ada's characteristics in Lucette throughout the novel, but here, Lucette is the first 'Ada'. Her detachment and remoteness through illness already portend a series of later illnesses that are veiled in Nabokov's grandiose style. While the 'ghosts' refer to the governess, Lucette is already a ghost in the shade of Ada, whom Van has not yet met.

From their early childhood, Ada refers to Lucette in sexual terms. When the family is gathered for dinner, she announces: '"Incidentally she will come down after tucking in Lucette, our darling copperhead who by now should be in her green nightgown -" "*Angel moy*," pleaded Marina, "I'm sure Van cannot be interested in Lucette's nightdress!"' (56). Here, Marina interrupts Ada's narration of Lucette's night attire and forbids the subject to go further, while making explicit the interest in her nightdress. Ada continues talking and brings up the image of Lucette in her bed counting sheep. This innocent image is made even more repellent when we learn of Ada's later sexual abuse of Lucette.

Van has the ability of walking on his hands, which he later uses when working in a circus. The party trick is harmless when he is doing it. By helping Lucette with this trick he 'ploughs' her around the garden.

> 'Come,' he added, 'we have not yet ploughed today.'
> A day or two before, Lucette had demanded that she be taught to hand-walk. Van gripped her by her ankles while she slowly progressed on her little red palms, sometimes falling with a grunt on her face or pausing to nibble a daisy. Dack barked in strident protest… 'Not so *energichno,* children!' cried Marina in Van – and – Lucette's direction.
> *'Elle deviant poupore,* she is getting crimson,' commented the governess. 'I sustain that these indecent gymnastics are no good for her.'
> Van, his eyes smiling, his angel-strong hands holding the child's cold – carrot – soup legs just above the insteps, was 'ploughing around' with Lucette acting the sullow. (76)

Both the mother and governess again recognise the sexualised content in their 'games'. However, it is older Van who uses this language when describing this scene and possibly sees the harm that he has done. During this episode, Ada does not say a word, and yet despite the highly transgressive nature of this game, Van and Lucette seem to remain innocent of any untoward action. Whenever Van is near Lucette alone, he keeps the relationship safe and reminds himself not to encourage Lucette. Only Ada's games with Lucette prove destructive. Van even recalls 'with mixed feelings how much more developed her [Lucette's] sister had been at not quite twelve years of age' (156). Van is appraising Lucette's naked body while she runs around the pool, and his mixed feelings here seem to imply that he sees Lucette's innocence as something to be preserved. She is growing more slowly than Ada, who therefore has to make her grow up with the initiation into sexual knowledge.[1]

[1] Ada's own introduction to sexual knowledge is vague and already assumed at the start of the book, but her Uncle Demon, (her real father) does seem to have a penchant for pulling her around: 'He pulled the girl to him…and he glued himself with thick moist lips to her hot red ear through the rich black strands' (195).

One of Ada's ideas is to tie Lucette to a tree. Just before she does this, Van and Lucette are occupied with their own thoughts and actions, and Ada is watching them both:

> Ada sat reading on a similar bank, wistfully glancing from time to time at an inviting clump of evergreens (that had frequently sheltered our lovers) and at brown-torsoed, barefooted Van, in turned-up dungarees, who was searching for his wristwatch that he thought he had dropped among the forget-me-nots (but which Ada, he forgot, was wearing). Lucette had abandoned her skipping rope to squat on the brink of the brook and float a fetus-sized rubber doll. Every now and then she squeezed out of it a fascinating squirt of water through a little hole that Ada had had the bad taste to perforate for her in the slippery orange-red toy. With the sudden impatience of inanimate things, the doll managed to get swept away by the current. Van shed his pants under the willow and retrieved the fugitive. (115)

This scene anticipates future events. Van's obsession with explaining time and trying to hold on to the past and denying that the future exists is revealed here through the literal loss of his timepiece, which Ada governs by wearing. The forget-me-nots are the reminder of this little incident in Van's mind as he writes his manuscript. Ada's 'bad taste' here harms the doll and introduces Lucette to biology and sexual knowledge before she is ready. While Lucette thinks the doll is merely urinating, Ada's intention remains ambiguous. The last few words of the novel are of fragmented images, one being: 'a pretty plaything stranded among the forget-me-nots of a brook' (461). Boyd suggest there is

> A pleasant irony in the wristwatch being a "plaything," in this novel so seriously concerned with the nature of time – but the watch was not after all stranded among the forget-me-nots. What *does* get stranded there is the doll which Lucette again lets drown – as Van recalls when he described her death. (123)

When Van describes Lucette's death he says: 'the red rubber of a favourite doll remained safely decomposed among the myosotes of an unanalyzable brook' (389).[2] The doll was not saved by Van, and he connects the drowning of the doll, with Lucette's death. Nabokov states that this scene with the brook is 'unanalyzable'. Therefore, Nabokov says

[2] Myosotis is the botanical name for forget-me-nots.

we should not analyse this earlier scene and so should not see the connection between this unintentional drowning of the doll by Lucette and the later parallels with her suicide. Whether he is being disingenuous or not, he has made his point. From one scene to the other, Nabokov has placed an image of something that will of course be analysed by the critic.

Nabokov's strong aversion to the Freudian technique is in the case study that Lucette embodies. Nabokov points out that Van writes Lucette's life as a case study and so her story will become victim to the fragmentary approach of a typical Freudian case study. The personal bias of an analyst, ulterior motives, and memory issues of the analyst who writes up the patient's narrative after the session means the narrative is fragmented. We as readers are also guilty of analysing Lucette and her story, and so we are forewarned and made to recognise that nothing can be simplified into a unitary reading.

One of Van's ideas to keep Lucette occupied is to make her learn and recite a poem by heart. He wishes her to go to her room for a full hour and prove to her 'nasty arrogant sister that stupid little Lucette can do anything' (117). He gives her a small poetry book of his own, which she treasures, and goes off to learn the assigned poem. In later life, he writes:

> He was to recall it with a fatidic shiver seventeen years later when Lucette, in her last note to him, mailed from Paris to his Kingston address on June 2, 1901, 'just in case,' wrote:
> 'I kept it for years – it must be in my Ardis nursery – the anthology you once gave me; and the little poem you wanted me to learn by heart is still word-perfect in a safe place of my jumbled mind, with packers trampling on my things, and upsetting crates, and voices calling, time to go, time to go. Find it in Brown and praise me again for my eight-year-old intelligence as you and happy Ada did that distant day, that day somewhere tinkling on its shelf like an empty little bottle. Now read on:
>
> 'Here, said the guide, was the field
> There, he said, was the wood.
> This is where Peter kneeled,

That's where the Princess stood.

No, the visitor said,
You are the ghost, old guide.
Oats and Oaks may be dead,
But ***she*** is by my side.'[3] (118)

Lucette dies on 4th June 1901. This is not only her last note to Van, but also her last correspondence to anyone and the meaning is wholly ambiguous. On 2nd June, Lucette would have been packing to accompany Van on the Tobakoff cruise ship, without his knowledge. When Van finds her name on the passenger list, he writes as if he is shocked by her presence: 'What constricted his heart? Why did he pass his tongue over his thick lips?' (373) Lucette has purposely followed Van on to the ship in one last hope that they will be together. When she realises this will never be the case, she commits suicide, but her note bores holes in Van's memory. He mentions with hindsight that this is a 'just in case' note, and if something was to happen to Lucette he would still be able to find the poetry book. While the 'packers' physically pack her things for the voyage, an ulterior meaning is placed in this note which Van can only see seventeen years later. 'Time to go, time to go', is a reference to her suicide. Towards the end of the novel, Van writes that on June 4th, she 'looked in vain for a bit of plain notepaper without caravelle or crest; ripped out the flyleaf of Herb's Journal, and tried to think of something amusing, harmless, and scintillating to say in a suicide note' (388). These are Van's later interpretations of Lucette's last moments, and the adjectives he uses are humorous but inappropriate for such a scene. Van distances the grief and guilt he feels by using a comic tone. Her difficulty

[3] Brian Boyd gives a thorough explanation of the significance of the two stanza poem composed by Nabokov at http://www.ada.auckland.ac.nz/ada123ann.htm Of particular interest is Boyd's allusion to Robert Browning's poem, 'Adam, Lilith and Eve', (1883) and therefore I see the comparisons of Eve and Lucette, and Ada and Lilith and the love triangle that ensues in the poem.

with expression in her suicide note is projected on to her seventeen years later by Van who now realises how she had been ignored.

The Patient Lucette

Nabokov's public thoughts on Freud and analysis are here, and elsewhere in his fiction, made clear**.** With *Ada*, he gets the chance to further his own analysis of the experience of a little girl who has grown up too soon, and monitor through fiction her responses and actions to these early sexualised experiences. Paul H. Fry says:

> Like his Aunt Aqua, his [Van's] patients are never deeply psychotic or dangerously schizophrenic. They are [...] obsessives, melancholics, riders of hobbies, agoraphobes, chronophobes, and – above all – visionary dreamers of a celestial Terra […] (It may have been unclear to Nabokov that his crude contempt for Freud thinly disguises a more pervasive contempt for the seemingly petit bourgeois world of psychoneurotic disorder itself.) (136)

Nabokov may have resented these 'petit bourgeois' neuroses that pervaded the first half of the twentieth century in Europe, and also Freud's methods of analysis, but *Ada* makes clear that both Aqua and Lucette were suffering from the effects of being the victim of a triadic relationship.[4]

As with Breuer and Freud's case studies, which were fragmented versions of the "original" narrative, Nabokov chooses to have Van portray Lucette's pain in fragments. Lucette's own story is completely obscured by Van and Ada's quips, tangential digressions and impossible intelligence as their narrative swamps any of Lucette's reactions to their

[4] Together with Nabokov's dislike for Berlin and refusal to learn German, despite living there for 18 years, a case could be made for his general dislike of this Austro-German 'petit bourgeois' obsession with analysis in the first half of the century. Nabokov's satire of 'incest literature' has its origins in Germanic literature. See Jethro Bithell, *Modern German Literature 1880-1950*, London, 1959, 3rd ed, who says "Incest becomes a favourite theme at this period" (33).

abuse of her. Both Aqua's and Lucette's lives are actually presented as scattered memories, obscured associations, and can become lost in the narrative of Van and Ada as they write this manuscript and take a nostalgic tour through past memories. Through these remembrances, they encounter glimpses of Lucette gorging herself on food, taking pills, writing letters either forgotten or repressed and hidden. Van's chronicle is supposed to explain the events leading to Lucette's death, as well as his and Ada's love affair, but Nabokov uses it to reveal his view that psychoanalysis takes over the narrative of the patient who is meant to be the narrator of their own story. Van fails at trying to give Lucette a voice.

Marina's own 'petit bourgeois' neuroses and vain desires are made comic. Even Ada is portrayed as a comic figure when she mentions her own desire to die: 'I'm writing from Marina Ranch – not very far from the little gulch in which Aqua died and into which I myself feel like creeping some day' (264). The reader cannot take Ada seriously. Ada's life reflects Marina's; the dried up overrated self-obsessed actress who does not notice the pain she inflicts on others, particularly her sister.

We first encounter Aqua who has spent much time in mental institutions; "my nusshaus" as Aqua calls it, or '"the Home," as Marina more demurely identified it' (12). Like Ada, Marina's hobby is botany. Nabokov portrays Aqua, as he does all his suffering young female characters, having difficulty with being heard, and as having problems with articulation. Here, Aqua signs her letters as 'Madame Shchemyashchikh-Zvukov'; in brackets we are told this means 'Heart rending-Sounds' (22). Alexey Sklyarenko makes the connection that this pen name comes from Aleksandr Blok's poetry and that the poems containing this line, 'Of heart rending sounds' ('A Sound Draws Near..' and 'Incantation by Fire and Darkness'), are inspired by the vision of a free Russia, Nabokov's dream.

Nabokov's own problems with and regret at his lost language are made all the more poignant when placed alongside Aqua's inability to vocalise her emotions in the face of her philandering husband and deceitful sister. Her inability to vocalise or understand her situation, (she does not realise Van is not her child but does suspect this to be the case) parallels Nabokov's own frustrations and despair with his lost language, childhood and family home.

Moreover, Aqua develops a 'morbid sensitivity to the language of tap water – which echoes sometimes…a fragment of human speech lingering in one's ears…' (25). In her delusions Aqua thinks she has invented the telephone and that water is a means towards this communication. However, whenever somebody, particularly 'the most hateful of the visiting doctors' (26) speaks to her 'forcibly and expressively' (25) she turns off the water. Nabokov connects Aqua's associations with water and difficulty with speech with Lucette's same difficulty resulting in her choice to die by drowning.[5]

Van's role as psychologist has been commented upon by Mason who suggests that his scholarly papers, 'Insanity and Eternal Life' (*Ada*, 148), are inspired by Lucette. Although Lucette is not technically his patient the parallels, Nabokov suggests, between Van and Lucette, and between Freud and his patients, are an attempt to mirror the dynamics of the doctor/patient. Van becomes a mouthpiece for Nabokov's rant against Freud:

> Now the mistake – the lewd, ludicrous and vulgar mistake of the Signy-Mondieu analysts consists in their regarding a real object, a pompon, say, or a pumpkin …as a significant abstraction of the real object, as a bumpkin's bonbon …nothing – underscore 'nothing' […] can be construed as allowing itself to be deciphered by a witch doctor who can then blame on a too fond, too fiendish or too indifferent parent –

[5] The next paragraph details Aqua's mind frame during her confusion and breakdown and it is interesting to note that neither Aqua, ('I just can't make out what my wrist-watch says…,' 26), nor Van who loses his watch amongst the forget-me-nots, can hold on to time. Van dedicates his life to trying to explore time and psychiatry and although Aqua is not Van's birth mother, it is as a result of her mental illness that he takes on these vocations. The mother figure, even in madness and death influences Van's decisions.

> secret festerings that the foster quack feigns to heal by expensive confession fests. (286)

Nabokov's anxiety with Freud seems to lie more with Freud's dream theories than with the analytical case study. But here, Nabokov certainly reveals the flaws and shortcomings of the analytical technique, and yet seems to understand the difficulty Freud and other analysts faced when writing up a patient's story. Thus, he shows Van's narrative of Lucette to be of fragmented images and symbols. The symbol of Lucette's skipping rope is a constant reminder of her childhood innocence and her bondage (when Ada ties her to a tree with it).

In this last major novel, Nabokov glances back at his own cherished childhood: Leland de la Durantaye suggests that one of the reasons Nabokov disliked Freud, was Freud's sexualisation of childhood. Durantaye also introduces the idea that Nabokov's 'energetic hostility towards Freud' (63), could be because Freud 'represented a special danger for art' (63). Durantaye pieces together a case for Nabokov being familiar with the case history of the 'Wolf-Man', published in 1918.

A letter from Véra to Nabokov's biographer, Andrew Field, in the Berg Collection reveals that Nabokov did read many of Freud's works in English translation.[6] Nabokov may have disagreed wholeheartedly with Freud's methods, but Durantaye captures both Freud's and Nabokov's attention to details in their writing.

> What Nabokov very consciously sought to counteract were approaches to art that, in their aspiration to uncover the general, neglected the particular. And this he found in Freud. (68)

Both Nabokov and Freud revel in the 'particular', in other words, the details of a patient's story. Durantaye goes on to say:

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[6] Dated January 31st, 1966 from Montreux

> In Freud's writing – above all in his case histories – fantastic attention is paid to the most minute and seemingly derisory details of his patients' lives. (64)

While I agree with Durantaye, that Freud does pay attention to the details in his patients' lives, I rather see Freud's inability to narrate his patients' stories fairly as a thorn in the side of Nabokov.

Lucette displays certain psychological symptoms because of the abuse she has suffered, but these symptoms are sidelined, and only dealt with in snippets that the reader could overlook. Van makes a few small points about Lucette's weight and eating habits. When she sits on his lap in the journey home from a picnic, he writes that she had 'remarkably well-filled green shorts' and that she was 'full of *fois gras*' (221). She has had to go to the Tarus Hospital 'to settle what caused her weight and temperature to fluctuate so abnormally' (185), and there are other instances of Lucette hoarding food and eating. As does Catherine in *Washington Square*, Lucette uses food as a crutch to stop negative emotions from flooding her mind, and clearly, Nabokov had the vision of a disturbed little girl in mind when he created Lucette with her eating disorder.

Ada is aware of Lucette's gaze and says 'we are watched by Lucette, whom I'll strangle some day' (119). These images of strangulation and eating again look back to Catherine who eats to stifle her voice, and Sloper's effort to strangle a voice out of her.

In a scene where Ada and Lucette both kiss Van, Van thinks that Lucette's 'dewy little contributions' only served to enhance rather than dampen his reactions to Ada's kisses. When the governess arrives on the scene, Lucette runs to her in tears having witnessed 'what Van could not control' and her governess says *'Mais qu'est-ce qu'il t'a fait, ton cousin?'* (But what did your cousin do to you?) (163). By including the governess's

remark, the older Van acknowledges his part in the too early sexual initiation of Lucette. However, there are times when Van puts the blame for Lucette's fate squarely with Ada.

> Ada thought up a plan that was not simple, was not clever, and moreover worked the wrong way. Perhaps she did it on purpose. (Strike out, strike out, *please*, Van.) The idea was to have Van fool Lucette by petting her in Ada's presence, while kissing Ada at the same time, and by caressing and kissing Lucette when Ada was away in the woods ('in the woods,' 'botanizing'). This, Ada affirmed, would achieve two ends – assuage the pubescent child's jealousy and act as an alibi in case she caught them in the middle of a more ambiguous romp. (168)

Ada adds a request to edit out Van's presumption that she devised this scheme on purpose. It is unclear whether Ada wished Van's comment to be struck out because of the painful memory of this incident, or because of Ada's ulterior motives of going into the woods to meet another lover. In both cases, older Ada wishes to edit out this part of her that Van has recognised.

However, Van says 'the three of them cuddled and cosseted so frequently and so thoroughly that at last one afternoon on the long-suffering black divan he and Ada could no longer restrain their amorous excitement' (168). Lucette's participation in the triad becomes a foil for Ada and Van to continue their activities while keeping Lucette ignorant of their relationship. Her need to be involved allows Ada to devise a stratagem that will ultimately lead to ruin for Lucette and temporary bliss for Ada and Van. However, Ada still locks Lucette up in a cupboard, and whenever she feels Lucette's face contains the 'look of stricken ecstasy' she is 'smartly slapped' (168) by Ada.

Ada uses Lucette to wring out information from Van too. She accuses Van of liking the attention Lucette gives him: '"Perhaps she excites you? Yes? She excites you, confess?" "This summer is so much sadder than the other," said Van softly' (169). These comments whether from memory or made with hindsight do lead the aged Van to see that Ada's participation in Lucette's life was perhaps more aggressive than his own.

Lucette reacts to any sort of affection Van shows her. Ada insists that Van give Lucette a 'vigorous, resounding spanking', but he instead, kisses her softly on the top of her head. This affectionate gesture emits from Lucette a 'storm of sobs' (180). Perhaps Ada's request for a spanking would have been better.

Lucette is completely caught between knowing and not knowing. She recognises that Van and Ada wish to be alone and she knows why, but she cannot vocalise it and it seems neither can Van or Ada. Lucette challenges them to admit what they do: "you two ***can't*** tell me why exactly you want to get rid of me" (180). Despite Ada's introduction of these sexual games, it becomes hard to vocalise the reasons why she wants to be alone with Van. Of course, an admission of this would cause chaos in the household, but Van's own difficulty with writing about emotional scenes mirrors Ada's own difficulty. Ada can only use vulgar or coarse language or puns when discussing sex. Years later, in Van's apartment, and on the cruise ship, Lucette is the only one who attempts to vocalise her pain, but placed amidst Van's digressions, it is hard for Lucette to voice coherently her anger and hurt.

When Lucette asks Ada: "could a boy bee impregnate a girl flower ***through*** something, through his gaiters or woollies or whatever he wore?" Ada responds to this simple request: "You know […] that child has the dirtiest mind imaginable and now she is going to be mad at me for saying this and sob on the Larivière bosom, and complain she has been polluted by sitting on your knee" (229). Van says Lucette responded: '"But I can't speak to Belle about dirty things," said Lucette quite gently and reasonably.' Suddenly Lucette's innocent inquiry into reproduction becomes, through Ada's cruel comments, a product of a 'dirty' mind. Lucette asserts her loneliness and reliance on Ada for clarification and education, as we watch Ada polluting her mind. Van's later view of Ada's actions can be

seen with his sympathy towards Lucette, who is gentle and reasonable, while Ada becomes hideous and garrulous. It appears that Van does not share in this joke: '"what's the matter with you Van?" inquired sharp-eyed Ada' (229). She comments that he clears his throat, as if trying to interrupt Ada's cruel words to her sister, or as a show of his inability to voice his own opinions of Ada's behaviour. Ada's jibe at Van, who she says will be the origin of this pollution for Lucette, is an acknowledgement by both Ada and Van that he has the potential to harm her and that Ada will always blame Van for any mishaps that should befall Lucette.

The culmination of Ada's cruel treatment of Lucette occurs four years later in Van's Manhattan apartment. Ada and Van have been living here having not seen each other since 1888, and Lucette turns up and stays. One morning, Ada physically makes Lucette take part in her and Van's sexual liaisons.

> Lucette shrugged her shoulders and made as if to leave, but Ada's avid hand restrained her. 'Pop in, pet…And you, Garden God, ring up room service – three coffees, half a dozen soft-boiled eggs, lots of buttered toast, loads of-'
> 'Oh no!' interrupted Van. 'Two coffees, four eggs, e*t cetera.* I refuse to let the staff know that I have two girls in my bed, one […] is enough for my little needs.'
> '*Little* needs!' snorted Lucette. 'Let me go, Ada, *I* need a bath, and *he* needs you.'
> 'Pet stays right here,' cried audacious Ada, and with one grateful swoop plucked her sister's nightdress off. Involuntarily Lucette bent her head and frail spine…' (329)

Van cannot defy Ada. Ada actively involves Lucette in her and Van's incestuous relationship. The mention of Lucette's nightdress takes us back to Ada's preoccupation with it when they were children in Ardis. Even now, Ada is keen to tempt Van with her sister. The nightdress becomes a symbol for Lucette's sexuality that Ada is keen to display.

One of Lucette's many letters within the novel is now quoted. The upshot of this scene is that Lucette flees Manhattan, and the triad, and writes:

Would go mad if remained one more night shall ski at Verna with other poor woolly worms for three weeks or so miserable

Pour Elle (332)

Lucette's letter lacks punctuation and any form of linguistic coherence; the 'Pour Elle' is very deceptive. Placed at the end of the letter, it signifies the sender; however, it clearly says 'For Her', meaning Ada. Lucette has not recognised Van's participation in the abusive treatment of her, only addressing this letter to Ada, and blaming her misery squarely upon Ada's actions. The next letter, written by Van, parodies the 'Pour Elle', and starts 'Poor L'. This phrase can now be looked at in the light of Ada and Van's never ending linguistic games; Lucette becomes a part of this game, and her own 'Pour Elle' is ambiguous. It is a statement of who she blames for her misery, and her realisation that Van will see Lucette as 'Poor L'.

This scene exemplifies the reasons why Ada needs to have Lucette involved in her and Van's love affair. In Van's digression-filled reply to Lucette, he apologises for his own involvement in the scene 'We went too far. I, Van, went too far' (332). Ada insists Lucette should have enjoyed the experience and suggests there is something in Van's tone that makes her slightly jealous. It seems she wants to provoke a relationship between the two, possibly to hide or make up for her own numerous affairs. Ada plays both Van and Lucette against each other. Since childhood, she has encouraged Van's sexual appreciation of Lucette and placed her in the role of sacrificial victim. In adulthood, she now tries to create a love triangle, full of the intrigues and jealousies usually associated with triadic affairs. However, Van remains obsessively in love with Ada. Lucette, while she loves Van, also loves Ada, if only because Ada looks like and is so close to Van. Again, we have an older woman encouraging her lover to maintain a relationship with a younger woman whose best interest would lie in the complete separation from him.

Lucette's Narrative Voice

In speech, Ada shines. She has learnt the art of conversation and expression through her mother, an actress who is overly fond of talking about her days in the theatre. Of a lunch in Ardis on Van's first visit, he writes that Lucette sat 'between Marina and the governess; Van between Marina and Ada'. Both Lucette and Van are trapped between strong women. Ada takes the lead in the conversation and as she relates a dream and describes a natural history wonder, Van remarks on 'Her spectacular handling of subordinate clauses, her parenthetic asides, her sensual stressing of adjacent monosyllables…' (54). Ada dominates the conversation and later, 'Far from being a bright lass showing off for the benefit of a new-comer, Ada's behaviour was a desperate and rather clever attempt to prevent Marina from appropriating the conversation and transforming it into a lecture on the theatre' (54). Van admires Ada's ability to cleverly control the conversation, unlike Lucette, who is trapped and silent between her mother and governess.

Lucette is not able to find her own words and in her adult life frequently borrows from Ada,

> 'I'll explain it, though it's just one of our sister's "tender-turret" words and I thought you were familiar with her vocabulary.' 'Oh, I know,' cried Van (quivering with evil sarcasm, boiling with mysterious rage, taking it out on the redhaired scape-goatling, naïve Lucette, whose only crime was to be suffused with the phantasmata of the other's innumerable lips). (297)

Van has often mistaken Lucette for Ada or seen parts of Ada within Lucette, and Lucette cannot detach herself from her sister's story and voice and find her own. Ada plagues and infests Lucette's world throughout the novel.

Lucette uses other means to communicate. When in a carriage on her way to a picnic, Lucette turns around 'and made slacken-speed little signals with the flat of one hand as she had seen her mother do.' (66) She also writes Van a letter, 'a rambling, indecent, crazy,

almost savage declaration of love in a ten-page letter, which shall not be discussed in this memoir [See, however, a little farther. ED.].' (287)

Lucette, as a child, is usually either audible and unseen, or seen and silent but not both in Van's early memories of her. Lucette has piano lessons and 'the repetitive tinkle-thump-tinkle reached Van and Ada during a reconnaissance in a second-floor passage,' and Van notes that Lucette was 'audibly absent' (163). Van 'heard from afar the governess and her wretched pupil recite speeches from the horrible 'Berenice' (a contralto croak alternating with a completely expressionless little voice)' (182). These fragmentary encounters with Lucette are similar to the disembodied mannequins prominent in *Lolita*. They are images of a fragmented personality and an emblem of both Lolita's and Lucette's fragmented stories within the novel, both written by older men.

In 1892, Lucette visits Van in his Manhattan apartment with a letter from Ada. Here, Lucette tries to tell Van about what has happened in the intervening four years since she last saw him at Ardis. Her narrative is constantly being interrupted by Van's digressions and witty anecdotes; by Van's current secretary who has problems with typing out Van's manuscript for one of his psychological studies, and finally, by Ronald Oranger who places doubt on certain remembered scenes.

When Van first sees her he thinks, 'She was slim and strange. Her green eyes had grown. At sixteen she looked considerably more dissolute than her sister had seemed at a fatal age…all in all, he had hardly known her before' (288). Van's words are remarkably similar to Humbert Humbert's thoughts of Lolita. Both men realise too late that they did not have any insight into these girls, and it is with hindsight and within their later manuscripts that they can realise this and try to explore the other side to their story.

The narrative becomes less clear when Van starts using parentheses and it is hard to decipher whether he is using them as part of his narrative, or whether it is Ada commenting on his narrative years later. Van's narrative becomes blurred as Ada's voice becomes more apparent. Van sees that Lucette has become drunk on brandy as she tries to say something which either Van or Ada interrupt, '"Tell him" (the liquor was loosening her pretty viper tongue) – (Viper? Lucette? My dead dear darling?) (290) Is it Ada who questions Van's own comment of Lucette's viper tongue, or the later Van who questions his own previous comment? The narratives begin to blur and even Van cannot find a distinction between his own thoughts and Ada's, who increasingly pervades his account.

In this scene, Lucette shows her bitterness towards her childhood torments at the hands of Van and Ada. She hurls pointed barbs at Van: "there was only the closet in which you two locked me up at least ten times" (293), and she does an imitation of Ada, "Pet must never disturb him and me when we are reading Rattner!" (290). Lucette goes on to explain the sexual exploits Ada introduced to her while they both lived in Arizona. While Lucette is telling this uncomfortable story to Van, the editor places doubt on her story with his interruptions, '[quite possibly, this is not remembered speech but an extract from her letter or letters. Ed.]', and '[here, it would seem, taped speech is re-turned-on]' (294). This whole scene has been reconstructed from fragments of Lucette's letters, Van's memory, and audible speech on a tape recorder. It appears that this scene in the apartment did not actually happen. Lucette is reduced to being an absent voice on a recorder and in a letter and is hidden within the shards of Van's biased memory.

While Lucette continues her discussion, the editor again interrupts and says '[The epithetic tone strongly suggests that this speech has an epistolary source. Ed] (297). Ronald Oranger serves two purposes here: to place doubt on Van's narrative, and also to

show the power an editor has once the work has been passed into the hands of others, a constant worry for Nabokov and Véra.

When Lucette finishes discussing her affair with her sister, Van is seen to be squirming and all at once the 'campophone buzzed', the radiators started making noises and a soda bottle pops. He seems to want to drown out her words with noise and beyond that, the voice over the phone is that of his secretary and here starts a linguistic battle between Lucette needing to be heard, his secretary who cannot understand one of his manuscripts, and Van who is trying to talk to both at the same time.

> Van (crossly): 'I don't understand the first word…What's that? *L'adorée?* Wait a second' (to Lucette). 'Please, stay where you are.' (Lucette whispers a French child-word with two 'p's.). 'Okay' (pointing toward the corridor). 'Sorry, Polly. Well, is it *l'adorée?* No? Give me the context. Ah – *la durée. La durée* is not…sin on what? Synonymous with duration. Aha. Sorry again, I must stopper that orgiastic soda. Hold the line.' (Yells down the 'cory door,' as they called the long second-floor passage at Ardis.) 'Lucette, *let* it run over, who cares!' (296)

While trying to prevent his manuscript from mistranslation and misquotes, Lucette's narrative becomes connected with the writing and editing process. When she jumps into the ocean, committing suicide, Van's description of this event is also interrupted with references to his new and final secretary, Violet.

> Although Lucette had never died before – no, ***dived*** before, Violet – from such a height, in such a disorder of shadows and snaking reflections, she went with hardly a splash through the wave that humped to welcome her…Owing to the tumultuous swell and her not being sure which way to peer through the spray and the darkness and her own tentaclinging hair – t,a,c,l – she could not make out the lights of the liner, an easily imagined many-eyed bulk mightily receding in heartless triumph. Now I've lost my note. Got it. (389)

When Van describes her suicide, we also get his dictation to Violet of this scene years later. The corrections and interruptions are, as Bobbie Ann Mason says, Van 'trying to distance himself from the grief he is reliving' (109), but I think this is also a crossing of

narratives. Van's early and later narrative voice are linking Lucette directly with the problem of narrating Lucette's story. Nabokov purposely introduces the problem of narrating a story of an abused young girl, trying to show how her voice has been fragmented by not only Van and Ada, but also the problem of his own efforts to tell her story. Both Van and Nabokov seem to be self-consciously struggling with Lucette's narrative voice and Van's problem with describing these emotional scenes are also a struggle with being heard, translated, and transcribed correctly. Nabokov's same concerns with translation and his worry of being mis-transcribed and mistranslated are shown here with Violet's linguistic problems and Van's exasperation.

Lucette discusses one of Ada's other affairs, 'a handsome Hispano-Irish boy,' whom Ada left and as a consequence shot himself. The result of this is that he is saved but 'he will never be able to speak' (300). Van replies, "One can always fall back on mutes" (300). Ada seems to leave a destructive path, silencing people as she wades through their lives, and Van's comment highlights the untold stories that pervade the text.

Even when Lucette tries to cry out it is in a whisper: '"I Apollo, I love you," she whispered frantically, trying to *cry* after him in a ***whisper***' (367). Van later similarly does the same when talking to Ada: '"Wipe your neck!" he called after her in a rapid whisper (who, and where in this tale, in this life, had also attempted a ***whispered cry***?') (407). Van is always remembering Lucette for her voice.

Not only is Lucette's voice represented in fragments, but her image too is shown to be a fragmentary flash of an image in the plot of Ada and Van. She is aware of her role when she says, "It's exactly my sense of existing – a fragment, a wisp of colour" (365). Lucette is described earlier by Van as a colour, 'guileless Lucette trotted into the room with a child's pink, stiff-bagged butterfly net in her little fist, like an oriflamme' (102). We hear

Lucette practising her piano or singing, or we hear her 'two small fists…drumming' (150) on the door wanting to be let in. She is called by Van, 'Lucette, the shadow' (168). We begin to realise that Lucette is always compared to a ghost: from the poem Van has made Lucette learn ('*You* are the ghost', 118), to remembered images of her: 'that little figure with its long shadow stopping like an uncertain belated visitor on a lighted threshold at the far end of an impeccably narrowing corridor' (89).

With so many fragmented images and so much half remembered speech, we realise that this whole manuscript is very similar to Humbert's and serves as an atonement for the way Van treated Lucette. It is also his recognition of how her sister also mistreated her. Van says that when they were in Ardis as children: 'Lucette, however, seemed to lurk behind every screen, to peep out of every mirror' (166). She almost becomes a conscience, ready to run in with injections of morality, but further to that, she is the reason Van sets out to write his book of his love affair with Ada.

It is Demon, who uncharacteristically notices the poor ignored Lucette, when he twice tries to bring her into the narrative, '"By the way, how's Lucette?" At this moment both battants of the door were flung open…' (196), and again a while later, '"By the way, how's Lucette?" Marina knitted her brows and shook her head acting the fond, worried mother though, in fact, she bore her daughters even less attention than she had for cute Dack and pathetic Dan. "Oh, we had quite a scare," she replied finally, "quite a nasty scare. But now, apparently –"' (207). Her sentence is left hanging and we do not find out what has happened to Lucette.

Lucette's life is marked by fragments; fragmented speech, and fragmented images ('Lucette peeped out, one russet knee showing', 39) and this continues in the description of her death.

> Legs and arms…numbness in her neck and arms. As she began losing track of herself, she thought it proper to inform a series of receding Lucettes – telling them to pass it on and on in a trick-crystal regression – that what death amounted to was only a more complete assortment of the infinite fractions of solitude. (389)

In a twist of the body 'blason' genre, Van describes Lucette, here and throughout the memoir, as a series of dissociated parts of the body, which means he can actually distort and distance his own tortured memories of her as a way of controlling his narrative. Van ventures to know what Lucette's last thoughts were. He presumes they are fragments of memory, the last being of 'a girl with long black hair' (390), this girl being Ada. As she drowns, she sees her different selves. Van combines Lucette's death with the 'trick-crystal regression', the psychoanalyst's attempts at hypnotherapy to recall past experiences. He sees her 'case' as intimately bound with the analyst's attempts at cure. Nabokov compares the fictional case of Lucette with the real Freudian case study and ultimately shows its worthlessness in trying to help such a girl as Lucette.

Nabokov's Anxiety of Influence

In the end, we learn that Van's obsession with holding on to time is similar to Nabokov's attention to detail. Both hold on to snapshots and images, fragments of memory and speech. Van says:

> The Past, then, is a constant accumulation of images. It can be easily contemplated and listened to, tested and tasted at random, so that it ceases to mean the orderly alternation of linked events that it does in the large theoretical sense. (428)

Van goes on to describe a series of remembered images throughout his life, all involving both Ada and Lucette equally. Throughout the memoir Van has inserted mundane images out of context that lead us back to an out of place image of Lucette e.g. 'Skip Lucette

skipping rope' (314). When in the afterword to *Lolita* Nabokov mentions various images throughout the novel that, for him, make up the novel, Nabokov has Van do the same in *Ada*.

Through Lucette's character, Nabokov can show how dangerous the older woman figure can be to a young girl's development, which is borne out in her speech and narrative. Through Van's attempts to write about a tragedy, Nabokov shows the complications and difficulties he has with narrating a young girl's life story, and combines this with his own awareness of his own difficulties with language and speech. Van's exasperation with secretaries who misspell, invade, and rewrite his work is connected with Lucette's inability to narrate her story, and Nabokov's ultimate problem of not being able to write again in Russian.

Robert Alter says

> In this last major work, Nabokov invented a hypothetical anti-world where everything culturally precious to him – the Russian, English, and French language […] could be harmoniously combined; and it may be that this embarrassment of riches encouraged a certain softness, made it more difficult for him to distinguish between imaginative necessity and private indulgence. (77)

I do not think Nabokov meant the three languages and cultures to be 'harmoniously combined'. Lucette's difficulties in becoming fluent in the word games in the three languages are a failure and mirror Nabokov's own struggles. Nabokov certainly does let his private concerns invade the text and these concerns centre on his own preoccupations with translation and understanding of his work. At the beginning of the novel we are given a lesson in pronunciation, 'She pronounced it [Ada's name] the Russian way with two deep, dark 'a's, making it sound rather like 'ardour' (37). Later we listen to Van rant about how he would find numerous errors in his proofs or worse, his published book: 'the book had already come out, had come out literally, being proffered to me by a dreadfully

imperfect, stage – with a typo on every page, such as snide 'bitterly' instead of 'butterfly' (283).[7]

Finally, Nabokov makes a leap into directly joining his own prose with that of Henry James. He connects Lucette and the 'Lucette character' (whom he has modelled on the girls in James's novels):

> He understood her condition or at least believed, in despair, that he ***had*** understood it, retrospectively, by the time no remedy except Dr Henry's oil of Atlantic prose could be found in the medicine chest of the past with its banging door and toppling toothbrush (382).

James's prose is very much alive in Nabokov's work to the extent that it is 'banging' and demanding to be heard. Nabokov himself demands to be heard within his own text.

Hägglund makes the point that 'Van and Ada inscribe layer upon layer of memories in their texture of time, but their hypermemoir also holds the threat of a lifeless repetition upon its posthumous publication, when readers and editors can do as they please with dead letters' (466). Nabokov recognises the part critics and editors play in misinterpreting a work and the misrepresentation that can lead to, as it has in the case studies of Bertha and Elma. Ronald Oranger seems to have the last say in this work, as he has the opportunity to add or subtract parts of Van's narrative. Here, Nabokov also acts as editor to his own tale, having one of Ada's last thoughts in the text left hanging. She says, 'It is like-' (443)

Ada's interjections throughout the novel seem to rather fracture Van's carefully laid out narrative. Initially, she acts as his editor, making comments in parentheses such as, 'Hue or who? Awkward. Reword! (marginal note in Ada Veen's late hand)' (14). But we realise that even her notes have been edited by the Editor, Ronald Oranger. However, Ada does keep second guessing Van and even herself, and the narrative begins to look doubtful

[7] A particularly significant error given Nabokov's love for Lepidoptera.

as to the truth of the document. It appears that the Editor, rather than covering up anything or editing out anything has actually transcribed the whole manuscript with all jottings by Ada. One such note makes it clear that this narrative has been edited many times.

> (Van, I trust your taste and your talent but are we *quite sure* we should keep reverting so *zestfully* to that wicked world which after all may have existed only oneirologically, Van? Marginal jotting in Ada's 1965 hand; crossed out lightly in her latest wavering one.) (19)

Ada's editing and re-editing of her own notes make the whole narrative a product of secrecy and of purposely blotted out memories. Ultimately, Ronald Oranger and his wife Violet, Van's secretary and typist of this work, hold the key to the undiscovered edits and what lies behind the hidden ellipsis. The editor chooses to include all mistakes and anything rubbed out by Ada, so while this manuscript is in the hands of an overseer who can change it, it appears that he has in fact done all he can to include everything. The representation of Ada's life becomes a marginal note to what she does and does not want people to read, and the unscrupulous editor who now uncovers all within the narrative has overridden her edits.

Freud said: 'A work's fate does not rest entirely upon itself, but also in the hands of those who want to represent it and promote it.' He asks 'Where will they take it?' (Fortune, xiv). This may be the only time Nabokov agrees with Freud, and his novel shows he is greatly aware of this and extremely perturbed by its implications.

Conclusion

I hope I have shown that James and Nabokov used the analytic case study as a methodology to represent the fragmentation that occurs in the daughter's speech in their novels. Real Freudian analytic case studies often develop into triadic relationships, and I have connected James and Nabokov's interest in the case study with the damaging effects of this triad. I have furthered research from the study of the father and daughter in James and Nabokov's fiction, to that of the mother, father, and daughter, which becomes more pressing when read together with 'real' case studies. The 'real' case studies reveal that the mother plays a more damaging role than the father alone and that without the mother as part of this relationship the father/daughter relationship would dissolve.

There is a simple comparison between the author and the analyst, but beyond this, I have found that James and Nabokov saw the shortcomings of the analytical role and recognised their own limitations as authors. Through their fiction, they explore and represent this weakness, situating the narrator in the dilemma of trying to be the analyst of, and the voice for, the daughter.

James discovered and used the 'non-scene' to describe the interiority of the daughter's life. He saw his sister Alice's struggle to voice her opinions in a stifling and overly mothered household. In his novels, he reflects on his own and Alice's struggle. His morphing of the psychological novel into a psychoanalytical novel, and the medical doctor/patient relationship that James and Alice experienced, prefigures the analytical doctor/patient relationship. James's editing of his own novel, *Watch and Ward*, and the uncertain narrator in *Washington Square*, are similar to the same revision and narrating process Breuer went through while piecing together his version of Bertha's story.

Whereas Breuer stopped short of recognising the damage Bertha's mother had done to her, James's chronology of writing from *Watch and Ward* through to *The Awkward Age* reveals his view that mothers are destructive. In *The Awkward Age*, he shows that the father/daughter relationship is preferable to the triad and takes the daughter away from the mother.

My analysis of the story of Elma Pálos contributes to the study of this triad using unpublished material by Elma, Michael Bálint and Ernest Jones. Emanuel Berman has yet to publish his definitive analysis of the 'Elma affair'. As other critics have compared the case of 'Dora' to fiction, I have used the case of Elma in comparison to the same themes that arise in the fiction of James and Nabokov. *Lolita* is very similar to the triadic relationship of Ferenczi, Gizella and Elma, (the father figure's marriage to the mother and continued an affair with the daughter), but there is no evidence, so far, that Nabokov knew of this affair. The comparison is in the similarity of the representation of the daughterly voice, and the fragmentation thereof. I have tried to bring Elma's voice to the foreground of this triad, and view the 'case' from her point of view.

Nabokov feminises his struggle with speaking and writing in a foreign language, which despite his excellent grasp of English, saw him regret his 'lost' native language. Whilst there have been some general comparisons of theme in James and Nabokov's fiction, I have specifically commented on areas where Nabokov has been directly influenced by James and his textual history, and not just influenced by James's daughter characters.

Nabokov follows James with his own recognition of struggling to represent the story of a young girl. Van is a more developed character than Humbert. He represents an articulate recognition of his failure to give Lucette a voice, and is Nabokov's expression of losing his own language. Geoffrey Green and Leland de la Durantaye's comparisons of Nabokov

with Freud found that Nabokov's work was influenced by Freud's theories, despite Nabokov's adamant dislike of the analyst. My study further pursues this connection having used the format of the case study, which Nabokov replicates, as my comparative method. 'Nabokovians' have been hesitant to see Freud as an inspiration for Nabokov because of his strong denials of the relevance of the Freudian technique. However, this study furthers research into this area of Nabokov's work in the hope that it will add to the study of his concerns with dangerous mothers and similar analytic triadic relationships, instead of focusing just on erotic father/daughter relationships. His recognition of voiceless analytic patients culminates in his portrayal of Lucette.

It will be interesting to see how my thesis fits in with Nabokov's final novel, *The Original of Laura*, which will be published in November 2009. The novel is itself fragmentary, appearing on a series of index cards, and therefore the fear Nabokov reveals in *Ada*, of being misrepresented and misread, will presumably occur in this last novel.

Through my interpretations of the case studies of Bertha Pappenheim and Elma Pálos, my attempts to raise the issue of misrepresentation and the endeavour to find original sources will, I hope, be a model with which to interpret future case studies.

The Shards of Inspiration

In a contradictory view what might be labelled as the new genre of 'critical fiction' allows the researcher to comment on the author's life and his concerns without committing to a solid conclusion or using solid information. If James's and Nabokov's fiction are critical interpretations of analysis and of the triadic and damaging relationships that ensue, then critical fictional interpretations may equally reveal current ideas about these same concerns. The results are, as Ferenczi believed, that the fictional author is able to see into

those areas of life that are closed to the analyst. Perhaps critical fiction is a genre that will be just as important for research into an author's life, or of an analyst's interpretation of a case study.

Fictional biographies such as Colm Toibin's *The Master* (2004) focus on James's awkward social personality. *Author Author* (2004), by David Lodge re-enacts the horrific reception James's play, *Guy Domville* had when first shown on stage. *Felony* (2002) by Emma Tennant is a post-feminist tale of James's close and ambiguous relationship with Constance Fenimore Woolson. Carol de Chellis Hill combines all these elements of James's life with Freudian analysis. Her crime novel, *Henry James's Midnight Song* (1993), pulls together all of the strands in Henry James's life and times. Thus, Henry James is jealous of Edith Wharton, he worries that Constance Fenimore Woolson's suicide is a reaction to his rejection of her and so he visits Freud in Paris and enters into analysis with him. At the same time, Freud is trying to cover up a bloodstain on his carpet which has come from the infamous nose of Emma Eckstein as a result of Fliess's botched operation, and an inspector is trying to solve a series of 'Jack the Ripper' inspired murders in Vienna. Added to this chronologically impossible scenario is a cameo from Bertha Pappenheim, still in patient mode, and Sabina Spielrein, envisioning the impending horrors of Nazi occupied Austria. It seems everything has been thrown in to make this an all-star novel, but despite this suspension of belief, Hill does hit upon some truths in her fictional account of analysis. She describes the moment when the patient's story is twisted and it becomes a part of Freud's method and cure:

> And it was here, he reflected later, at precisely this moment he made his error. "And you must realize too," he offered gently but firmly, "that there was enormous pleasure in this for you as a child…You have," he hesitated, "an unusually sensual nature, and in a child this is easily stimulated. […] She said nothing. Then a small

> whisper. "Oh, God, you mean I *liked* it?" she said. He could hear her struggling to ask him, "But why," the voice had gone thin, now, like a wire… (233)

Hill presents the moment, in a fictional resemblance of a real analysis, when a patient loses her own story, and another one emerges. As there is no record of the actual case study of either Bertha or Elma as it happened, Hill has replicated an, albeit fictional, account of the moments that critics of Freudian case studies try to discover.

D.M. Thomas's *The White Hotel* (1981), is an account of a fictional case study that more than resembles Elma Pálos. In the novel, Freud tells Lisa, the novel's heroine, that there are similarities between her and Elma, and it is clear that Thomas has taken the story of the triadic relationship of Elma, Ferenczi and Gizella, and reproduced it in the story of Lisa. The Hotel even resembles the sanatorium in Baden-Baden, where Elma spent some part of the 1920s. Where Freud almost makes the connection, illustrated in his diagram, of the effects of the mother on the daughter, Thomas, in his novel, has his Freud continue with this train of thought and complete the theory:

> I was thus quite mistaken in assuming the central characters to be "a man, a woman; a woman, a man". Whatever the appearance to the contrary, the role of the male, of the father, in the patient's private theatre was subordinate, and we were faced with two 'heroines' – the patient and her mother. Frau Anna's [Lisa] document expressed her yearning to return to the haven of security, the original white hotel – we have all stayed there – the mother's womb. (129)

This imagining of the patient/daughter's story in these novels seems to be part of a fictional act of restitution for the daughter's voice. Fictional representations of Nabokov's *Lolita* have also continued this theme.

Pia Pera's novel, *Lo's Diary* (1995), shows a sadistic and severely delinquent Lolita who knows exactly what she is doing with Humbert. Nabokov's son, Dmitri, wrote an essay called 'On a Book Entitled *Lo's Diary*', which Pia Pera included as a Forward to the novel.

Dmitri bewailed the 'would-be transformers' (viii) for getting away with what he sees as copyright infringement, and asks 'Is *Lolita* to pay this price because it is too good, too famous? Are writers to strive for mediocrity lest their works similarly enter the "common consciousness"?' (ix) Dmitri has the same fears as his father and realises the fate of a work lies with the reader for he ends by saying: '*Lo's Diary* is in your hands' (x).

These 'transformations' of texts are interpretive works; and attempts like *Lo's Diary* and also *Roger Fishbite* (1999) by Emily Prager (a similar novel to *Lo's Diary* which places 'Lolita' as a cross between Pera's rebellious Lo and Nabokov's desperate and sad Lolita), have been seen as feminist reactions to the dominance of Humbert's narrative. Perhaps James and Nabokov's novels should now be reappraised in the light of their own recognition of the stifled female voice, their efforts to reveal this within psychoanalysis, and as an attempt to make amends.

Appendix

Letters between Elma Pálos, Gizella Pálos and Michael Bálint from the Bálint Collection, University of Essex, Sloman Library Archive.

[Translation from Hungarian]

Bern, November 27th, 1946

Dear Misi, (Mike)

A little bird told me that you and your family and friends – whom I count myself one of – will soon be celebrating your birthday. I hope all your hopes and wishes come true and that you keep your good health till you are 120!

Well you and I are bad at writing letters but it's precisely for this reason we need to forgive each other. I don't know who's the busier of the two of us, I can only say of myself that I have to steal time in order just to eat and sleep.

Dear Misi – I think the enclosed letters and copies will interest you – although it's possible that Huber has also contacted you. It's a shame that things happened like this and it would be good to know if the National bank in Budapest is going to give at least the translations to mama or they would seize them on some pretext.

One can't help having become sceptical now.

Mama, Magda aren't yet with me – the poor things have got endless obstacles to get over – but now, at last, it seems they may be here in a few weeks.

Dear Misi – even if I don't write, you know that I think of you as a dear old friend.

Wishing you all the best once again,

Elma

How's Jankó, what's he up to?

Bern, Switzerland, 11th November, 1947

c/o American Legation, Elfenstr. 6.

Dear Misi

Thank you very much for your letter of February 3rd, and for looking after poor Sándor's books. As it is 'Armistice Day' I didn't have to go to work today, and in the morning I went with Mother to Hans Huber. He greeted us in a pretty friendly way. Straight away he showed us a copy of the letter he'd sent you yesterday in response to your proposition and so I am aware that H.H. is prepared to store the unbound copies of Sándor's books for no charge, until October 1948. This really is very nice of him and we hope that by then we'll have found a solution. So, after noting the present state of affairs, I really didn't have anything else to do. Mummy collected the 230.80 francs owing to her from last year's sale; she would like to save this to cover possible storage expenses in the future. It is quite impossible to store four cubic meters of paper at our embassy and at our place we don't even have a square centimetre spare – we have trouble storing even our own papers. Our legation now occupies ten different houses – it had grown to this size during the war – and it is for this reason that it is necessary to send any correspondence to the address

exactly as it appears at the top of my letter. The post takes much longer otherwise. All the cellars are damp and ??, and it would be impossible even if there were space.

It would be really nice if there were a publisher in London who would take these unbound volumes off our hands and then we could wait patiently until they were published. H.H., however, says there are problems with 350 bound volumes if they are – as he assumes volumes 3 and 4. Volumes 1 and 2 have sold out completely and, according to H.H., the sale of incomplete storage is difficult. – All the same, in the mean time I am going to find a reputable storage firm and ask them how much they would charge for storing 4 (four) cubic meters of paper – the volume according to H.H. – after October 1948.

Dear Misi – we have noted with regret that your marriage has brought you heartache instead of happiness. Wisdom and knowledge are all useless and we only get to know each other thoroughly through living together and so we only find out later whether two people are really compatible or not. I hope that the wounds in your soul, caused by this crisis, have healed by now and you can find joy in life and your work! I wish you this with all my heart! – Jankó, it seems is progressing towards his chosen aim without any difficulties and this must make both of you very happy – but what a joy it would have been if Alice, too, would have been able to see her son as a physician! How cruel is fate!

Dear Misi, I hope that on your next trip to Switzerland you will also visit Bern. I [sic] would not be impossible?? – I should like to thank you again for your help and for the interest you have shown in my and Sándor's affair. – Please pass on my regards also to Gyuri and to the two young gentlemen.

Your old friend,

Elma

_____

12 November 1947.

Dearest Misi,

I'm causing you a lot of problems with Sándor's book, aren't I? But I hope you don't mind dealing with them as you are helping me and, even more so, helping Sándor. Thank you for your help and your friendly feelings. If you speak to Rickmann, please pass on my best wishes – he can pass them on to his wife, if she still remembers me. – Now I would like to make you a business proposal: referring to *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse* (*The Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis*) by Ferenczi translated into English? If somebody would be willing to do this I would share the proceeds with him, provided he would finance the initial investment.

Unfortunately, I am no longer able to acquire any money and hence wouldn't be able to make a contribution to the expenses. If it is not possible then please forget the whole thing. – Our permit to stay here expires on January 10th but there is a little hope that it can be extended once more till April –and then we will say farewell to Emma [Elma?]. – I have received recently a letter from Alice II, she and Feri are very happy that Olga and her family are going to visit them, but I am sorry that I was unable to see them in Budapest. How much would I like to meet Jankó and Juci again! Who would have thought that her son would pass his medical exams so quickly! How many more years has he got to do before he qualifies? I have a piece of news that will interest you: I am no longer poor as a church mouse as the state has offered to pay me 500F every month. I was not entirely

happy about this help though it is very important for me. Please forward my warm greetings to Blau's brother-in-law and I hope that he will visit us again. Emmy seems to be happy in Budapest and finds it difficult to leave her home. She is awfully fond of you, dear Misi.

Your Aunt Gizella

….

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Bern, 1947 November 16th

Dear Misi,

Our letters crossed each other so I'm writing quickly to thank you for your quick and successful work. My mother is very happy that Imago Publishing House are prepared to take the unbound copies from Huber and of course agrees to your settling any price you think is reasonable for them. The fact that mother may not be able to pick up any pounds sterling that might be due to her doesn't trouble her too much as the important thing is that Sándor's ideas should survive and spread, regardless of the cost. As I had mentioned to you in my letter written some time ago, Mother had received 218 francs from Huber which she had put aside to cover future storage costs but now of course she's much happier that it can be used to cover the costs of transporting the texts to London. If then we've finished the whole thing, you can count on us to pay the cost of transport up to 218 francs – or if it is a little more, we would pay that too. But of course we're hoping the 218 will be enough.

I hope the way we have written the authorisation will be ok. Unless something unexpected happens, Mother and Magda will go tomorrow, Monday, to a notary who will witness mother's signature and then post everything quickly.

We are looking forward therefore to your further instructions and in the mean time we send you our love and grateful thanks.
From the whole family,
Elma

_____

17th December 1947.

My Dear Misi,

I have received yesterday a letter from Anna Freud which is of interest to both of us and, after reading this, I also think now that the time has come to hand over her father's letter to her. For me the important thing is the publication of the writing relevant to Sándor as soon as possible – to prevent his name fading. The dead are quickly forgotten and – now that Sándor has become silent – he cannot arouse interest anymore with newer publications. I feel this task falls now on us.

Am I right, my dear Misi, that you also approve of my plan, and you will endeavour to discuss with Anna how much and what exactly she wishes to publish of the letters?

I think she will harmonize the essence of the two friends' correspondence. I am going to write to Anna today that I have told you that she can have her father's letters – on

condition that after their use she will give them back to you as I want to leave them to my children as a souvenir. – I heard from Alice that you are planning a family reunion at Christmas. I hope and trust that it will be a great success and I would like to ask you in the name of all three of us, to pass on our best wishes for the New Year and also wish you the merriest of moods on the 24th December.

Elmagda [Pet name for Elma and Magda] and I send you our warmest regards,

Yours truly

Your Aunt Gizella

[Some writing with different handwriting on the first page:]

Dear Misi – have you received my letter? I am waiting for your answer and the developments of the matter with interest and that when should we send the books?

With love and good wishes

Elma

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30 December 1947.

My dear Misi,

As you could discern from my telegram, your letter had the desired effect and I will also write in the same style, without deliberation. Your arguments have completely convinced me that you were right – and further more, not for all the treasures in the world would I want to offend you, dear Misi, you, who has given me such strong support in everything since the death of Sándor, and you have every right to have the correspondence tided up and published. Please let me thank you again for everything that you had done in the past,

and will do in the future, for Sándor and me. I shall find it a little difficult to make Anna understand the reasons I changed my mind – although I have not promised her anything nor have I given her any rights. When she asked me to let her have her father's correspondence I advised her to get in touch with you and I hope you would agree with her plans. I can see from your letter that I acted too hastily and recklessly and now I will endeavour to tell Anna tactfully that after further consideration I think it would be better if the scientific correspondence of the two friends were published on its own. How wise it was from you to ask Sándor's letters to be returned – but I am not sure if you have the right to hold on to them if Anna demands that they should be returned to her? I should also like to let Anna know what a good friend you were of Sándor while he was alive and therefore now that he is dead I feel I would be ungrateful, and he would be offended, justifiable, if our friend, Dr. Bálint were now deprived of the right to publish correspondence.

[unfinished, continuation missing]

[In English]

Bern, Ankerstr. 8,

8 December 1953

Dear Mihály,

As you can see, it's only now I am replying to your letter of September 30th. I'll answer your point one by one:

Yes, we got 8 pounds from the Hogarth press in the summer, the sum due to us from the sale. I understand and agree with your intention of liquidating the 'Bausteine', it's sad that you feel this necessary but one must be realistic. It's sad that if poor Sándor hadn't been taken so quickly by the hands of cruel fate then he would not be forgotten so quickly by the scientific world.

It's exceedingly kind and good of you if you are happy that the large debt we owe you should be repaid from the moneys we shall be receiving in the future. As I see it, this won't be happening so – if ever – as Anna and Jones want to discard all the personal topics – in most cases, this is understandable – and so what remains probably won't be enough for a new volume. We only hope that the third volume, *Contribution*, will be successful morally and financially, the latter for your sake. Just as a curiosity I want to mention that after the 142-4-4 I had received last year I had to pay more than $126 tax, and hence I would prefer, if it is possible, that from now on Hogarth press should pay you any money they might be receiving next year. Very little of it would be left for us but this way we would be repaying our debt to you a little sooner.

A friend of mine sent me last summer an appraisal on Jones that had been published in the Observer. He is now really the grand old man of psychoanalysis.

I'm very please indeed that everything is going well for you, that you can continue your profession in a tranquil atmosphere. You have fully deserved this from fate, and also the joy that your children and grandchildren give you.

Of Feri and his family I know nothing. I have written to Böske Bér some weeks ago and asked her how they were. I shall pass the news on to you when she replies. I am sure you know that dear Robert has died. Most of those at home are starving and cold, in clothes that they have worn away and they are spiritually crippled. It's a sad world down our way. I send sometimes medicine to Mrs. Felszeghy who is still doing child analysis. She must be clever to be able to do this despite the ban; it's a testament to his [sic] skill.

I am thinking of you with fondness as ever,

Elma

Mrs. Elma Laurvik, December 15th, 1953

Ankerstrasse 8,

Berne.

Dear Elma,

There is no need to apologise. I can still read and write Hungarian; the reason I write to you in English is that I can dictate the letter and you get it in typescript, which I think is more convenient for both of us.

Thank you for your consent to my proposition and I shall now be able to sign the contracts. The manuscript is practically ready and I shall be sending it to the printers in a few days.

I am afraid you misunderstand my proposal about *Bausteine*. It is true that I complained that it is selling slowly, but as I have ample room in my garage to store the flat sheets, I do not think there is any need to scrap it. It is quite possible, and I hope very much it will happen, that the publication of the new volume in English will call attention to the *Bausteine* and that we shall get more orders.

I agree with you that it is annoying that the letters cannot be published as they are, but it must be realized that there are quite a lot of comments about people still living, comments quite free and not meant, either by the writer or the recipient, to be made public. This means that a certain selection must be made, whether we like it or not. I think the best policy is to wait and see the response to the new volume and to decide then what to do with the correspondence.

Like you, I have no news either from Hungary except an occasional request for medicine. This time it is from Erzsi. Perhaps you remember she was the wife of Feri, Aunt Irene's son.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,
Yours sincerely,
[Signed by Bálint]

_____

Bern, Ankerstr. 8, February 13, 1955

Dearest Mihály:

Thank you so much for letting me know about the standing of the affairs. I agree with all you are doing and proposing and, besides, I am terribly grateful to you for being so patient about my debt to you. I do hope things will work out and you will be reimbursed within a year's time. The most important [sic] is that Sándor's works should appear, read, understood and appreciated, then the financial side will solve itself, I am sure. I am also sure that you are right to wait with the publishing of Sándor's diary and correspondence with Freud. Sándor certainly would not like to hurt or to upset people. All his precious thoughts are in your faithful and loyal hands, they will not get lost to the world.

Exceptionally we had good news from Budapest, though that is a matter concerning only our small family, not a general good news, unfortunately. Perhaps you remember that our cousin's, Denes Pista's son, Pisti, wanted to flee into Austria, was caught and sentenced to 4 years at Maria Nosztra. Now after 3 ½ years they let him go, to the joy and happiness of his parents and of all of us. He came back in quite good spirits and health, not as broken down as we were afraid he would be. Whether he will succeed to get a decent job and start a new life again, remains to be seen. Three of them live in a room, bring water from a well, have no comforts whatsoever, but now, that they are united, they can stand the rest.

Magda still speaks with enthusiasm about the nice hours she spent with you and your charming wife. She cannot praise enough your kindness and thoughtfulness. I too would

be very happy to meet your wife and see you again, dear Mihály, but as things look now I doubt that we will be in S/land in July. By July 1st I will stop to work as I intend to resign, after 30 years of toil and then we plan to leave immediately for Italy, the land of my dreams and where I have not been since I live in this country. We might stay away for about 6 weeks. After our return we will have to pack, settle things and take our courage into our hands and move back to the United States. It would be too long to explain why we think that this is the best solution for us, even though our heart will remain in Europe, but we feel, it has to be. Of course, things are not so simple, there are many questions and problems we still have to solve somehow. We often wish we had at least ONE good and clever man-friend between us two as we are left very much alone with our problems. However, we are old enough to be able to solve them somehow, would you not think so?

May be you plan to come to Italy too after the Congress? If you do, it would be a nice country to meet again, but if not, you might come over to the States someday for a visit. I can assure you it is not such a bad country after all, and most interesting. We do not know yet where we will settle, probably in New York; it depends upon several matters.

Well, let us hope for the best, for you, for us and for all good people.

Did you hear about Mrs. Izette de Forests's book, "The Leaven of Love" written about Sándor's analytical method? She asked me to give certain biographical information on Sándor's life and now I am supposed to find here a publisher for the German translation that a friend of hers wants to make. I got nothing but refusals till now and being as busy as I am I cannot devote more time to it. You know how fond Mrs. de Forest was and still

is of Sándor and of our mother. Being a layman (laywoman?) I feel I am no judge of her book but she certainly is a loyal friend.

Please remember me to your wife and Magda joins me in thanks and best wishes to both of you.

As ever yours,

Elma

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